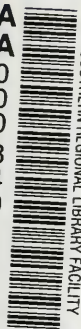
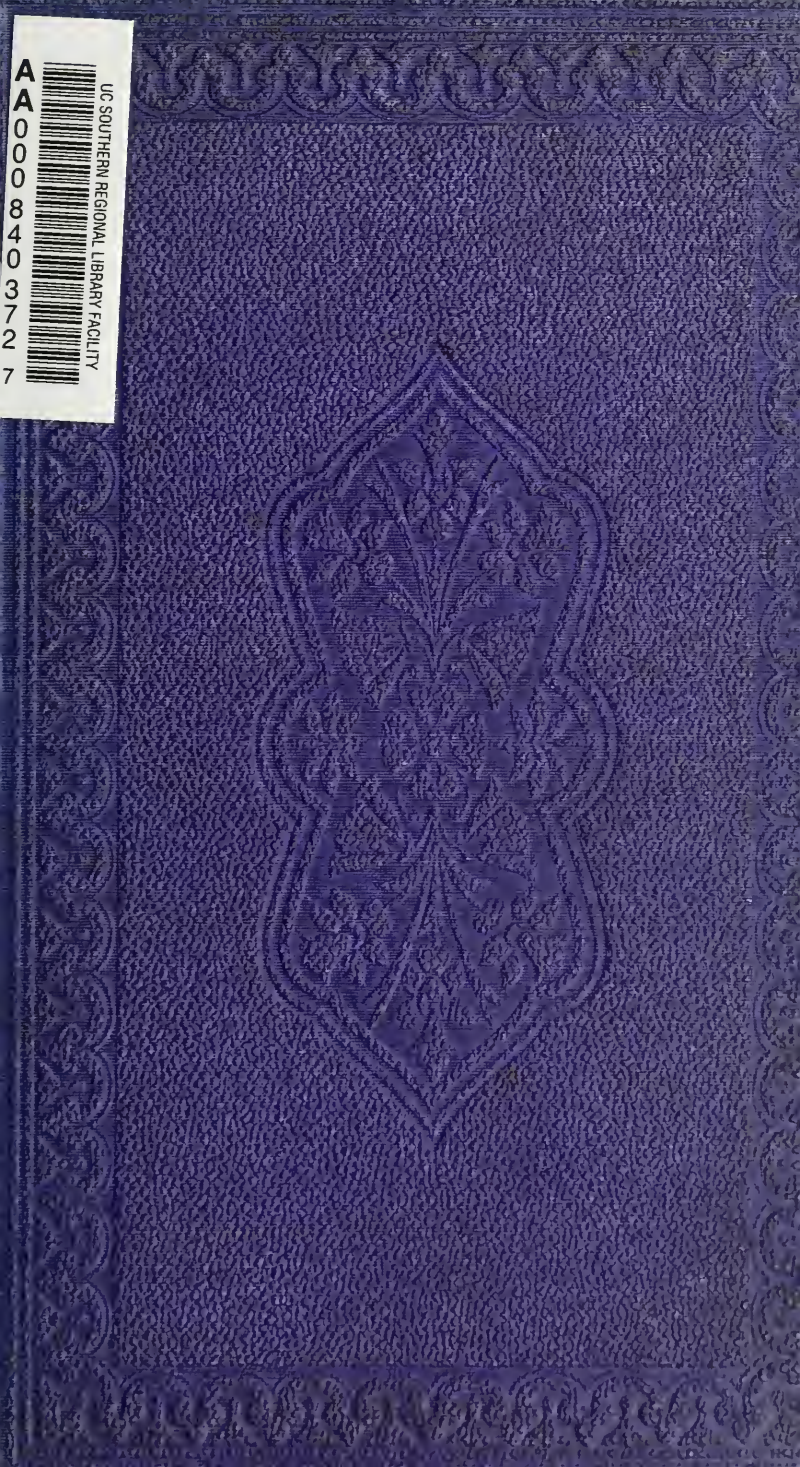


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THE LAST DECADE  
OF  
A GLORIOUS REIGN.  
VOL. I.







# THE LAST DECADE OF A GLORIOUS REIGN.

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## PART III.

OF  
THE HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.  
KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE.

FROM NUMEROUS UNPUBLISHED SOURCES.  
INCLUDING MS. DOCUMENTS IN THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE IMPÉRIALE,  
AND THE ARCHIVES DU ROYAUME DE FRANCE, ETC.

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BY  
MARTHA WALKER FREER,  
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“THE LIFE OF MARGUERITE D’ANGOULEME,” “JEANNE D’ALBRET,”  
“ELIZABETH DE VALOIS AND THE COURT OF PHILIP II.”  
“HENRY III., KING OF FRANCE,” ETC.

“A cœur vaillant rien d’impossible.”—LEGENDE DE HENRI IV.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BOOK VII.



# THE LAST DECADE

OF

## A GLORIOUS REIGN.

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### CHAPTER I.

1602—1603.

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DURING the remainder of the year 1602, judicial investigations, connected with the trial of the duke de Biron, continued to occupy king Henry, his council, and his parliament. Hébert, the confidential secretary of the duke de Biron, was subjected to interrogatories of extraordinary severity; and was once stretched on the rack, to extort admissions which might furnish a clue to the complete sifting of the late conspiracy. No fact of importance was elicited; but Hébert was condemned to perpetual incarceration in the Bastille—a sentence which the king remitted after the expiration of five years. The baron de Luz received a mandate to appear and justify his late relations with Biron; for the duke, on the morning after his arrest, had warned the king to take possession without delay of the

fortresses of Dijon and Beaune, as M. de Luz, on the news of his detention, would probably deliver these strongholds to the governor of Franche-Comté. The baron, moreover, had been deeply implicated by the revelations of Lafin, who charged him with treasonable participation in the correspondence of Biron with the foes of France. This summons overwhelmed him with consternation; though accompanied by a letter from M. de Rosny, assuring de Luz that the king, on his frank confession, was willing to remit the punishment due to his past disloyal intelligences. The fate of Biron, the treatment of Hébert, and the execution of one M. de Fontenelles, convicted of having entered into compact with the condé de Fuentès to deliver up the port of Douarnenés to the Spanish government, were facts not calculated to inspire a guilty man with courage. After much vacillation, de Luz resolved to obey the summons: escape over the frontier seemed impossible, or a risk too great under the vigilant eye of the maréchal de Laverdin, who now ruled Burgundy. The king had hitherto abandoned all accused persons formally arrested to the rigour of the law; a humble personal appeal, therefore, to the royal clemency was an experiment worth the trial, inasmuch as a journey to Paris, either voluntarily, or with an escort of his majesty's archers, was not to be avoided. De Luz accordingly, yielding to the advice of the president Jeannin, set out for Paris. He arrived, and threw himself at the king's feet, as Henry was leaving the Louvre to hunt in the forest of Vincennes. "Ah!

M. de Luz!" exclaimed Henry—then interrupting the baron, as he was about to speak, his majesty added, "Go to M. de Rosny!" De Luz obeyed the mandate in great misgiving—for the gloomy precincts of the Arsenal seemed to him the threshold of the Bastille. He was received by Rosny with courtesy, but was at once subjected to the sifting interrogatory in which that minister excelled. De Luz frankly confessed all he knew: he confirmed in many respects the evidence of Lafin, and acknowledged the treasonable understanding which had existed between Biron, late governor of Burgundy, and the Spaniards in Franche-Comté—a league in which he was himself comprehended, with many subordinate officers stationed in the chief garrisons of the duchy. While de Luz was thus engaged, he suddenly stopped in his narration, and rising, directed the attention of Rosny to a detachment of royal guards which had just formed in the court of the Arsenal. "Monsieur! you intend to keep the royal word given, and which alone induced me to venture hither? Am I to endure arrest?" "Compose yourself, monsieur," rejoined Rosny, sarcastically; "persons like yourself should never shrink from consequences which they have deliberately risked: nevertheless, have no fears; I have no orders to arrest you. Repair to-morrow to see the king; confess the past, and promise his majesty future fidelity, and you will have cause to laud and bless the clemency which will be vouchsafed towards you." The following day, Henry gave private audience to M. de Luz, whose penitent acknowledgments were



ample : his revelations, however, like those of Lafin, filled the royal mind with disquietude, so many and illustrious were the names he divulged as participators in the project which brought the head of Biron to the block.<sup>1</sup> The constable de Montmorency was said to be especially implicated ; though, by the advice of Rosny, the accusation never echoed beyond the confines of the chamber in which it was uttered. The comparative coldness subsequently evinced by Henry for Montmorency is ascribed to this suspicion ; though Rosny asserts, that beyond evincing much predilection for the society of Biron, the constable was guiltless of disloyal practices. The count d'Auvergne, meantime, took his prison easily, being permitted to see his consort, and his sister, Madame de Verneuil. Henriette was escorted across the court of the Arsenal at dusk hours, and introduced into the Bastille by the postern used only for the ingress of M. de Rosny. The count was allowed to provide for his own table ; his guards were reduced to five archers ; and he was permitted to walk on the ramparts. M. d'Auvergne was not subjected to a single interrogatory ; the only severity used towards him was that of being present at the examination of Hébert, after the ordeal of the latter in the torture-chamber. His powerful parentage, and the protection of his sister, doubtless shielded M. d'Auvergne. Madame

<sup>1</sup> " Mon amy : Le baron de Luz est arrivé qui m'a conté force choses, et tellement estrange qu'a peine le croiries vous possible ! qu'il y a des gens qui depuis la mort de M. le Maréchal de Biron continuent le traité ! " A M. de Rosny, B. Imp. Suppl. F. MS. 1009. Lettres Missives, t. 5.

de Verneuil wept, threw herself at the king's feet, and threatened to retire from Paris unless the boon was conceded. She even induced the king to grant audience to her brother: whether Henry accompanied his mistress on her nocturnal visit to the grim fortress; or whether, through the ever-ready aid of Rosny, the interview passed at the Arsenal, is not on record. The count seems to have been a passive colleague in the hands of Biron and his friends; and although he lent his name, he apparently had little knowledge of the aim and intents of the conspiracy. The frivolous and restless disposition of M. d'Auvergne involved him in constant trouble; he aspired to the *rôle* of a conspirator, without even the capacity to act consistently; while he deemed loyal obedience an evidence of an ignoble spirit. Nevertheless, in the interview procured for him by his sister, the count condescended to the meanness of proposing to the king, as the price of his liberation, to continue his relations with Spain, in order to divulge the plots and secrets of the cabinet of Madrid to his majesty. He desired alone, he said, guarantees on the following points: namely, that the king would demonstrate neither surprise nor anger at his *liaison* with the Spanish ambassador, Taxis; nor seize certain packages of papers which were likely from time to time to be transmitted from Madrid. Henry, after an interval of several years, related the particulars of this audience to Rosny: but, great as was the contempt which his majesty felt for this degenerate prince of Valois, he, nevertheless, consented to the proposal,

so intricate and dangerous did he esteem the machinations of the Spanish cabinet. The king averred positively, that this consideration alone, and his unwillingness to condemn the uncle of his children by Henriette to die by the hand of the executioner, had weight in inducing him to pardon M. d'Auvergne. Henry had hereafter cause to regret his sanction of such meditated perfidy ; for his own royal licence, which gave M. d'Auvergne liberty to correspond with Spain, afforded opportunity for the concoction of a second conspiracy, scarcely less formidable than that of Biron. The count obtained release from the Bastille on the 2nd of October, after having submitted to several examinations, which resulted in no avowals, before the chancellor Bellièvre and M. de Rosny. The following couplet was thereupon composed, and circulated throughout France :

“ O grand Dieu, quelle iniquité!  
Deux prisonniers ont mérité  
La peine d'un même supplice;  
L'un qui a toujours combattu  
Meurt, redouté par sa vertu,  
L'autre vit par l'amour du vice!”<sup>1</sup>

Meantime, ambassadors from the potentates of Europe arrived in Paris, to congratulate king Henry on his escape from the wiles of M. de Biron. Queen Elizabeth addressed fervent felicitation ; and commended the firmness demonstrated by the king in inflicting condign chastisement on his rebellious subject. The king of Spain and the duke of Savoye

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV.

had also the audacity to compliment Henry on his escape! Don Juan de Taxis, that ancient foe of France, visited the king at the Louvre on the 15th of August. The ambassador was likewise commissioned to demand passage for a division of Spanish troops on its way to the Netherlands, through the district of Bresse. "I am commanded by his Catholic majesty, my august master, to express his hope that your majesty feels persuaded that he had no share in the cabals of the late marshal de Biron." Henry replied, "that it was his wish to remain on amicable terms with king Philip: nevertheless, he could not feel persuaded that his Catholic majesty was ignorant of a conspiracy concocted between Biron and the condé de Fuentès: neither was it probable that any subject of Spain would presume to appropriate large sums from the treasury, unauthorized by the sign-manuel of king Philip!"<sup>1</sup> "It would be an ignominy, and a weakness to complain publicly, with folded arms, of the part which Fuentès and the duke of Savoye took in the recent conspiracy; therefore, M. de Fresnes, you have done well to refrain from descanting on this matter in public," wrote Henry, immediately after this audience, to his ambassador at Venice. "Nevertheless, I will never say that these personages were not implicated. I should be guilty of direct falsehood, so manifest, that its utterance would be attributed to pusillanimity. It suffices, therefore, that for the present I signify my sentiments in general statements . . . . I expect redress from God—

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 128.

and by the prowess of my own sword.”<sup>1</sup> The count de Fiesco was the ambassador sent by the duke of Savoye to exculpate his master; and to report the havoc made on the noblest reputations of France by the duke’s deceitful cabals. Henry listened to the protestations of Fiesco with a smile of contemptuous incredulity; and made no response to the address. The archdukes Albert and Isabella, with greater candour, commanded their envoy to express sincere sympathy, and to lay all the blame on the clandestine intrigues of Fuentes. The archduchess-infanta sent the queen a dwarf of such diminutive stature, that the little woman was conveyed to the Louvre in a cage, and presented in full circle to her majesty, who was pleased to express her delight at the gift. Marie’s pleasure in the splendid festivities given to the envoys was, however, marred by her jealousy of Madame de Verneuil. All the ambassadors, excepting the envoy from Florence, repaired on quitting the Louvre to the hôtel de Soissons to pay their homage to the powerful favourite. The queen in vain protested; and purposely excluded Henriette from the private *réunions* at the Louvre. The wit, the beauty, the tact, and genial humour of Henriette d’Entragues infused such animation into the splendid entertainments which she gave, and at which Henry always showed himself, that the fame of her festivities eclipsed those of the queen.

Henry, meantime, was not recompensed for the storms and tears with which he was assailed at the

<sup>1</sup> Archives de M. de Couhé Lusignan.—Lettres Missives, t. 5.

Louvre, by unalloyed felicity in the society of his mistress. La Marquise was ashamed of her position; and overwhelmed the king with reproaches for the dishonour inflicted on the noble house of Balzac, by the breach of his promise to repair the wrong done to her, by the gift of the crown matrimonial, as he had covenanted in the promise so tenaciously guarded by her kindred. "Sire, I protest to you, that I would rather have been the humblest waiting-maid of her whom you term your consort, than to be what I am!" exclaimed Henriette with passionate tears. The count d'Entragues and M. d'Auvergne boldly proclaimed their sense of the wrong sustained by Henriette: nevertheless, as M. d'Entragues had willingly espoused Marie Touchet, mistress of king Charles IX., and the count d'Auvergne was the king's son by the latter, it cannot be supposed that a very keen sense of dishonour animated the sentiments of either of these noblemen. The most devouring jealousy harassed the king. La Marquise was suspected by him of entertaining the design of forming a puissant matrimonial alliance, or of quitting the realm. Her communications with the prince de Joinville, her former admirer, were watched with anxiety. She often treated Henry with the utmost disdain; sometimes she affected pious resolves, and retired to a convent; at others, she suddenly quitted Paris without apprizing his majesty, and shut herself up in her father's fortress of Marcoussy—in short, there was no capricious wile wherewith to torment his majesty, which Madame la Marquise did not essay.



During these *tracasseries*, Henry and his ministers were engaged in a momentous correspondence with the duke de Bouillon, who also was accused of complicity in the recent conspiracy. The power, the wealth, and the alliances of Bouillon, his position as chieftain of the Calvinists of France, invested his disaffection with boundless peril to the monarchy, wherein germs of revolt yet lingered. On taking leave of his majesty at Blois, the duke retired to his castle of Turenne, where he remained a silent, though indignant observer of the arrest, trial, and sentence of Biron. The revelations of Lafin, and of M. de Luz and others, implicated Bouillon in the late Spanish intelligences; but especially for the crime of exciting rebellion in the provinces of the realm, with the object of again reorganizing the Protestant league, of which the duke would now have been the acknowledged leader. Soon after the arrest of Biron, the king wrote to the duke, informing him of the fact; and promising to show proof of the marshal's guilty deeds, if Bouillon would repair to court. The king insinuated his desire for the presence of Bouillon with the greatest tact; and carefully concealed the fact that the interrogatories of the accused impeached his loyalty. Bouillon responded to an overture which he was pleased to take in the light of a courtesy, by despatching a gentleman, one M. Rignac, to compliment his majesty, and to deprecate the peril he had escaped. His letter is filled with protestations of submissive loyalty; to Biron he only alluded in the words, "that he trusted this affair might not permanently

trouble the repose of his majesty; or imbitter his noble and generous temper.”<sup>1</sup>

After the demise of the marshal, evidence of more entire collusion in the designs of the conspirators rendered it imperative, as the king deemed, that the duke de Bouillon should appear to justify himself from the accusation. Extreme delicacy was requisite: the Huguenots of the realm were likely to resent, or even to rise in defence of Bouillon, whom they regarded as their support and oracle. The duke's alliance with the house of Nassau, his recognized influence over his brothers-in-law, Prince Maurice and the Elector Palatine, and the favour with which he was regarded by the queen of England, rendered it desirable in the highest degree to lure him to Paris by amicable negotiation. Henry, therefore, directed Rosny to write to inform the duke that his name was mentioned as one of the personages accused of having possessed information of the designs of Biron: “This fact, monseigneur, ought to act as an incentive to you to repair forthwith to court, to proclaim your innocence, or to obtain the pardon of the king by your admission of error. I will willingly be surety that no displeasure shall befall you; therefore, repair to court in all assurance of safety.” The patronizing tone assumed by the minister grated harshly on the haughty spirit of Bouillon; who remembered the time when Rosny stood in the ante-chamber “of the king of Navarre,” and deemed himself honoured by a salutation. The fate of Biron also,

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 13ème. De Thou, liv. 128

who had repaired to court on the royal solicitation, was one full of terror and foreboding. Bouillon, therefore, contented himself with again sending a reply, couched in humble and loyal language; but still evading an answer to the solicitations made him to visit Paris. On the 10th of November, therefore, the king wrote with his own hand to Bouillon. His majesty stated that the duke had been accused by witnesses at the trial of M. de Biron, and although he placed no belief in the statements, yet that such averments ought to be effaced by denial, or by condonation; "therefore, mon ami, as your good master and true friend, believing you innocent of this charge, I exhort and command you to repair hither without delay or hesitation; and by so doing you will stifle all imputations which now stain the renown of your loyal integrity."<sup>1</sup> Bouillon promised obedience to this mandate, and set off from the Château de Turenne. Instead, however, of taking the road to Fontainebleau, the duke repaired to the little town of Seré, and from thence to Castres, in which place Henry had established chambers for his Huguenot subject, before which certain civil and ecclesiastical suits were cited, and judgment

<sup>1</sup> "Si le duc est innocent pourquoi craint-il de comparoître devant moy, qui ne fis jamais injustice a personne? Si, au contraire. que n'a-t-il recours à ma clemence, de laquelle se sont bien trouvez tous ceux qui s'y sont fiés?" writes King Henry to his ambassador at Venice, M. de Fresnes Cannaye.—Archives de Couhé Lusignan.—Lettres Missives, t. 6.

rendered in conformity with the Edict given at Nantes. From Seré the duke addressed an humble letter to the king, stating his motives for the course which he had taken; and justifying it on the plea that the royal ear was possessed by personages his bitter enemies, traitors to the state, who, failing in their malevolent negotiations with foreign powers, desired to drive the most potent subjects of France to revolt, and thus to accomplish their aims. "Can those persons be trusted, sire, who have broken fealty to their prince? This doubt, therefore, prevents me from visiting the court. My conscience reproaches me with no misdeed; but my honour and interest are supremely concerned that truth should be manifested. For this reason I supplicate your majesty to permit me to avail myself of the liberty conceded by your edicts; and to consent that my case may be examined by those who profess my own faith. My prayer may the more likely be conceded if I remind your majesty that, as I am accused of seeking to aggrandize Spain at the cost of France, judges more inexorable than those I ask could not be found. I have, therefore, repaired to Castres, in order to throw off before rigorous judges the burden of so enormous a calumny."<sup>1</sup> The personages referred to by Bouillon were Rosny—whom the duke intensely disliked for the manner in which he had executed the royal commission to make inquiry relative to the will of the duke's first wife—and Villeroy. He also

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 13ème. Marsolier, Vie du Duc de Bouillon. De Thou, Dupleix, Mathieu.

deemed that the members of the Parliament of Paris were unduly influenced by the chancellor de Bellièvre; therefore, that causes tried by that supreme tribunal were decided according to the dicta of ministers, rather than with regard to a strict award of justice. Henry greatly resented the proud and defiant bearing of Bouillon. Moreover, the king was extremely sensitive on the subject of the trial and execution of Biron: Bouillon's disobedience, therefore, showed disapproval of those proceedings; and distrust of the royal generosity and good faith as concerned himself. A mandate was despatched to Castres, forbidding the chambers from taking cognizance of so grave a question as that of the guilt or innocence of the duke de Bouillon; "inasmuch as the tribunal of Castres had been convoked to judge local and sectarian affairs only; and not to interfere with the prerogatives of the parliament of the realm; which court could alone judge criminals accused of offences against the state." At the same time Henry addressed a second missive to Bouillon: his majesty observed, "that it was not for the duke to make choice of his judges; moreover, that he reserved that office for himself, and desired only to hear the exculpation of the duke from the lips of the latter." This letter the king intrusted to the president de Caumartin, to deliver it in person to Bouillon: should the latter afterwards persist in his contumacious refusal to obey the royal behest, Caumartin was instructed to arrest the duke. Bouillon, however, was too shrewd to fall into the snare: on

being apprized of the mandate which prohibited the chambers of Castres from interfering in his cause, the duke procured an act from the tribunal to certify that he had appeared, and offered to vindicate his loyal fidelity ; he then departed for Montpellier, after saluting the duke de Ventadour, lieutenant over Languedoc. At Montpellier Bouillon convened a great Huguenot assembly, and made protestation of his innocence ; deplored the malignant cunning of his majesty's chief advisers ; and prayed that the chieftains of the Protestant communities would petition the king, that right might be done, so that a Huguenot peer should be cited before, and judged by a tribunal composed of members professing the same faith as himself. Bouillon then declared that his liberty was menaced if he submitted to the king, counselled by his present advisers ; and that the peace of the realm might be endangered by the natural indignation likely to be felt by the Protestants at beholding the grievous persecution of one of their members. The duke, therefore, announced his resolve to quit France, relying on the protection of the churches. Bouillon suffered no time to elapse ; on quitting the assembly he set out for Orange, from whence he journeyed to Geneva. In Geneva, a city under such obligation to Henry IV., Bouillon scarcely deemed himself safe ; he therefore made short sojourn, and proceeded to Heidelberg, to the court of his brother-in-law the Elector Palatine ; where he was eventually joined by Madame de Bouillon.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marsolier, *Vie du Duc de Bouillon*, t. 3.

The duke's departure from Geneva was the signal for the concoction of petitions addressed to his majesty drawn in vigorous language, from the Huguenots of the realm ; in which they were abetted by the duke de la Trimouille, a nobleman between whom and the king great ill-will subsisted. In addition therefore to the annoyance occasioned by the distrust manifested by his old friend Bouillon, the king had to stem the torrent of a Huguenot agitation, throughout provinces already shaken by the late discords relative to fiscal reforms, and the abolition of *La Pancarte*. Moreover, Henry was disquieted by doubts as to the countenance likely to be afforded by Elizabeth, queen of England, to the rebellious attitude of his Huguenots in defence of Bouillon, to whom her majesty was greatly attached. He therefore directed his ambassador, Beaumont, to ask audience of the queen, to lay before her the evidence which inculpated Bouillon ; and to request her advice thereon. "The friends of M. de Bouillon desire that I should reject the accusation, on the plea, that he being a servant who owes everything to my favour, professing the reformed faith, and allied by marriage to the house of Nassau, it is not to be believed that the said duke should have tampered in the conspiracies of M. de Biron ; the object of which was the destruction of my person and realm, and the overthrow of the reformed creed, of which the princes of Nassau are so powerful a stay. To this I answer : If the duke de Bouillon is innocent, why does he not come, to receive from my lips the confirmation of



his innocence, the which justification I have greater desire to pronounce, than it appears that the said duke has to receive ! Nevertheless, it is my intention to wait, and see how far he will carry this contumacy ; so that at last he shall be forced to confess that my spirit is more merciful and just than his own is void of offence towards myself." Beaumont was instructed strictly to guard his sovereign's dignity in making this unusual overture to a foreign prince.<sup>1</sup> Bouillon undeniably acted at this juncture with great ingratitude towards his royal master, whose favour had raised him to eminent dignity. There is no doubt that his arrogance, and his jealousy of Rosny, had betrayed the duke into treasonable leagues against the government, in exciting the discontent of the Huguenot population, and in decrying the financial measures of Rosny. As to the charge that he had joined Biron in his schemes for the dismemberment of France, no proofs exist. Rosny had been also inculpated by the depositions of Lafin ; but no credit was attached to so improbable an accusation. The manner of the duke de Bouillon, nevertheless, gave margin for the gravest suspicion. From the period of his alliance with the heiress of Bouillon, he had demonstrated an unbecoming impatience at his position as a subject. Having acquired enormous wealth by this first alliance, the duke's pretensions became exaggerated in his own esteem by his subsequent marriage with Elizabeth of Nassau. His supercilious deportment when at court, and his

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 128.



disdain for Rosny, had given offence to his majesty. The duke's frequent boast of his powerful kindred, and of his influence over the Huguenot communities, and with Queen Elizabeth their patroness, irritated the king; who began to regret that his bounty had elevated a subject of temper so ungrateful and undisciplined. Queen Elizabeth replied with caution to the communications of Beaumont; but promised to instruct her own ambassador in Paris to develop her sentiments to king Henry, on the important affairs which then occupied him. Accordingly her majesty made known to her royal ally, that she pitied the duke de Bouillon; and deemed that the proceedings against him had been severe, and scarcely warranted by the testimony deposed to by the witnesses at the trial of M. de Biron. "Is it likely, my friend and brother, that the duke de Bouillon, so faithfully attached to your majesty through long years of adversity, should now by mad and perfidious treason blast his repute for honour and chivalry?" Elizabeth then observed that she deeply regretted the step which his majesty had been induced to take—for, that the honour of a great prince and soldier like Bouillon was not easy to repair, when once sullied by the accusation of his master; that in her opinion the king ought to have sent privately to advertise the duke of the testimony rendered against him; whereas, the public summons addressed to the duke had been read and commented upon by all the potentates of Christendom. "The fate of the duke de Biron, convicted on the same evidence, though in his case righteously, was likely

to alarm M. de Bouillon; who beheld himself cited to appear at court precisely with the same formalities as had been used with the former. I know," continued her majesty, "that M. de Bouillon has on more than one occasion been invited to join traitorous combinations against your majesty's realm; but these overtures have been uniformly rejected with abhorrence by the said duke." This frank statement, as Elizabeth expected, gave umbrage to her royal ally:<sup>1</sup> the king nevertheless, having proof of Bouillon's sympathy with the leaders in the late agitation relative to fiscal reforms, resolved to humble an arrogant subject whom he had surfeited with benefits, and who now ungratefully asserted his independence of his benefactor. "Verily, M. de Beaumont, I had flattered myself that my good sister, the queen of England, had a better opinion of me than she demonstrates," wrote the king with his own hand to his ambassador. "It appears that my conduct hitherto in important matters ought to have impressed the said lady with more favourable confidence in my judgment and equity, when she remarks that she fears 'that the influence which the enemies of M. de Bouillon possess over my mind, may prevent him from obeying my commands'—just as if I abandoned myself to the enmities and the passions of my servants, and had, by the chastisement dealt to the duke de Biron, given all honest people cause to distrust my favour

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 128. "La remontrance étant un peu libre, Henri en fut piqué, et ne prit pas ces avis de bon part," writes De Thou.

and justice—a charge which I did not expect from the said lady. The said duke is accused by the witnesses, heard on the conspiracy of Biron, of having had knowledge of, and participation in, such plot. Could I request him to vindicate himself of such charge in language of greater amenity and kindness than that which I used in my letter? If the said lady knew all the efforts and exertion I have made to prove the mind and spirit of the said duke, she would not have counselled me to act other than I did: for when she states, in apology for M. de Bouillon, that she knows that he has refused the offers of several princes, who wished to detach him from his allegiance to myself, in my opinion she rather accuses than excuses the said duke; who never confided, nor confessed the said overtures to me, as it was his duty to do, he being my subject, and, moreover, a personage laden by my benefits.”<sup>1</sup> Henry uses the same argument throughout a long letter; and concludes, by expressing his confidence in the queen’s equity, although he is resolved to reduce M. de Bouillon to his duty and allegiance, by the only modes which the latter seemed inclined to allow. His majesty, moreover, addressed letters to the Elector Palatine, to Prince Maurice, and to the Landgrave of Hesse, exhorting these princes to counsel their kinsman to return to his duty; but stating his resolve to be submissively obeyed before M. de Bouillon again

<sup>1</sup> MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Brienne, MS. 38, fol. 333. Le roi à M. de Beaumont.—Lettres Missives, t. 5. Berger de Xivrey.

took his position at the court of France. The king was right in this decision : having once suffered his suspicions relative to Bouillon to transpire, he had no alternative ; while the offensive arrogance of the duke's conduct neutralized the effect which might otherwise have been produced on his majesty's mind by the carefully-worded letters and manifestoes published by the latter. The king, moreover, interdicted the Huguenots of his realm from making intercession for Bouillon ; or from intervening in the affair—especially the duke de la Trimouille. “You perceive, mon ami,” said Henry to Rosny, “that MM. de Biron, d’Auvergne, de Bouillon, and three other personages, whom we will not name, are precisely those whose caprice and cupidity have caused me most sorrow and solicitude.” Bouillon, therefore, remained an exile from France, resident at the court of his brothers-in-law. In vain these noble personages, the Swiss Cantons, and various potentates, implored king Henry to grant letters patent absolving the duke from the “malevolent charges of his enemies.” The king firmly reiterated his will, that Bouillon, should appear, vindicate himself from accusations so dishonourable, and trust to the clemency which hitherto had never failed him. His majesty also rejected the proposition, eventually extorted from Bouillon, “that he had no objection to appear, provided the king would permit him to choose his judges ; and that the inquiry might be holden in a place of his own selection.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marsolier, Vie du Duc de Bouillon.—De Thou, liv. 129.

During these transactions, deputies from the Swiss Cantons entered Paris, to renew by oath their ancient treaties and compacts with the crown of France. The alliance had been negotiated, and completed by the unfortunate marshal de Biron, whose last public service was this ambassage to Solcure, in January of this year 1602. In the month of October, when the deputies arrived in Paris to witness the royal confirmation of the pact, Biron lay in a traitor's grave. The alliance of the Swiss was an advantage hotly contested by the cabinets of France and Spain. Fuentès lavished bribes and countless concessions to purchase the good-will of the five Catholic Cantons, and to secure the neutrality of the remainder. To close so prolific a recruiting ground to France was considered an achievement worthy of much concession. Attachment for the ancient monarchy of the *fleurs de lis*, under the banner of which their ancestors had fought, nevertheless prevailed; Biron's proposals were enthusiastically applauded, and the alliance renewed. The Swiss deputies, therefore, entered Paris on the 14th of October, after meeting with hospitable entertainment at Conflans, from M. de Villeroy. The troop consisted of about 200 horse—the deputies being picked men from the Cantons, renowned for military prowess. Two days after their arrival in the capital, they were received by the king. The hall and great staircase of the Louvre were lined with troops: his majesty's body-guard presented arms when the Swiss entered the court of the palace. The cavaliers, having previously dined

with the chancellor, were conducted to the Louvre by the duke d'Aiguillon. They were received by the duke de Montpensier, the count de Soissons, and the prince de Condé, and introduced into the royal presence. Henry sat on a throne, arrayed with great magnificence. He received the deputation standing, and saluted the cavaliers by waving his cap: afterwards he gave his hand to be kissed, and embraced each personage, who knelt to perform this homage. Orations were next pronounced; great enthusiasm being manifested by the Swiss when in the presence of the valiant king. Henry then descended from his throne, and discoursed with that frank courtesy of manner which ever proved irresistible to friend or foe. The cavaliers then went to pay their respects to queen Marie. Her majesty received them under her canopy of state, surrounded by the princesses and chief ladies of the court. The deputies approached, making profound obeisance; but as the queen did not present her hand to be kissed, nor incline graciously as they advanced, the cavaliers excused themselves from kneeling to kiss the hem of the royal robe, in accordance with the significant hints of the *grande maitresse*. On quitting the Louvre, etiquette compelled the ambassadors to repair to St. Germain to salute the infant M. le Dauphin. In the evening Madame de Verneuil entertained them at a ball, at which Henry was present. The ceremony of the ratification of the compact signed by France and the Cantons, took place at Notre Dame on Saturday, October 19th. Pontifical mass was

celebrated by the archbishop of Vienne, in the presence of the court and the ambassadors from the orthodox Cantons. The Protestant deputies, though present at the ceremony, remained in the nave of the church during the religious service. Mass concluded, the deputies surrounded the royal canopy, and, advancing two and two to a small table, upon which the Holy Gospels had been placed, laid their hands on the sacred book, and took oath of faithful alliance. Henry then rose, the train of his mantle being borne by the duke de Montpensier; and, amid thundering salutes from the cannons of the Arsenal and Bastille, he signed the treaty. A banquet in the episcopal palace followed this ceremony: the king and queen dined in a chamber opening from the banquetting hall. The deputies were feasted magnificently; and when, after dinner, they drank to the health of their majesties, the king entered the hall and returned the toast, while her majesty appeared on the threshold and curtseyed her thanks. The stateliness of Marie de Medici, however, failed to make so favourable an impression on the minds of the frank and simple Swiss, as the condescension of the king, or the insinuating graces of Madame de Verneuil, with whom the ambassadors declared themselves enraptured.<sup>1</sup>

All ceremonies and entertainments being over, necessary for the ratification of the *entente* between France and her ancient ally Switzerland,

<sup>1</sup> De Thou.—Hist. de son Temps, liv. 129. Dupleix, Hist. de France. Mathieu, Hist. du Regne de Henri IV.



Henry, whose mind was engrossed by the case of the duke de Bouillon, repaired to Fontainebleau.

On the 22d of November, the queen there gave birth to a daughter, Madame Elizabeth, eventually queen of Spain. Marie placed great faith in the predictions of a holy woman recommended to the protection of the Medici by Clement VIII. Sister Angela had predicted to Marie that she would wear the crown of France some two years before that event seemed likely to be realized; also, that she should be the mother of three fair princes. When, therefore, the little princess arrived, the queen, with her usual vehemence, wept, declaring that the king would despise her: she even called the infant *petite regasche*, and desired Madame de Montglas, *gouvernante* of the royal children, to take the child away out of her sight. The king, however, being informed by Madame Concini of his consort's tribulation, paid a visit to the disconsolate *gouvernante*, and, taking the new-born child from her cradle, he embraced her affectionately, and carried her to the queen's pillow. "*M'amyé*," said his majesty, "let us thank God for the blessing of this daughter: your mother gave birth to a daughter, who has become queen of France. Why should my daughter have a less prosperous fate? Cheer up, *m'amyé*; if she, the daughter of France, proves a burden on our hands, there will be many forlorn damsels indeed!" The good king proceeded quaintly to expatiate on the necessity that daughters should be born to royal



houses, to form foreign alliances; and at length he succeeded in comforting his consort.<sup>1</sup>

During the queen's convalescence, an amusing incident happened to Henry, while pursuing his hunting expeditions in the neighbourhood of Grosbois. About midday his majesty arrived at the village of Creteil, unattended by any of his retinue, whom, in the ardour of an exciting run, he had left far behind. Hungry and fatigued, he entered a hostelry, and asked for dinner for himself, and some friends not far distant. The hostess replied, that it was too late; for that the only joint she had was already on the spit for some gentlemen above stairs, whom she took to be honourable proctors of his majesty's High Court. Henry looked with longing eyes upon the savoury joint; and at length desired the woman to carry to the gentlemen above the commendations of a weary traveller, with the request that he might be permitted to partake with them of their venison, on paying for his share in the repast. A surly message, "that there was enough for three persons, but not for four," was the reply returned; also "that the gentlemen having private affairs to discuss, could not be importuned by the presence of a stranger." The king therefore, judging that Vitry and other cavaliers must now be in the vicinity of the village, called the son of the hostess, and sent him with a message to Vitry,

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV. Récit véritable de la Naissance de Messieurs et Dames de France, par Louise Bourgeois, Sage Femme de la Reine. A Paris, Rutlin, 1652.

whom the boy was to distinguish by his "*casaque rouge*," desiring the latter to hasten "*pour trouver le maitre du grand Cornet*." The lad met the cavaliers, who were anxiously seeking their royal master, and acquitted himself of his errand. The gentlemen, therefore, put spurs to their horses, and galloped up to the door of the hostelry. The proctors hearing a clatter of horsemen, looked from their window, and recognized the cavaliers as part of the royal cortége. They therefore descended to pay homage to his majesty, who they doubted not was at hand. Henry, however, whispered a few words into the ear of Vitry, then vaulted into his saddle and rode away. Greatly astonished were the learned advocates on hearing the rank of their late hungry suppliant; but still more dismayed were these personages when by command of Vitry they were seized and escorted into the prison of the adjacent town of Grosbois, where, after having undergone a summary but severe discipline from the rod, they were conveyed back to the village, to dine on their venison with what appetite they might muster. "Adieu, messieurs," exclaimed Vitry, facetiously. "His majesty ordained your late wholesome discipline to whet your appetites, and to teach you in future to be more courteous when you fall in again with a hungry wayfarer. Console yourselves, however; for his majesty doubts not that you would willingly have shared your repast with himself."<sup>1</sup>

The convalescence of the queen was accelerated by an event which her majesty considered

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV., Pierre de l'Etoile, ann. 1602.

as likely to destroy the influence of Madame de Verneuil, if not to insure her banishment from court. To counteract the power of la Marquise seems to have been the unhappy subject of Marie's daily meditations: her ladies, to gain temporary influence with their royal mistress, made malicious and often exaggerated reports of the sayings and events of the Hôtel de Soissons. No respect for the exalted rank to which she had attained, nor for the interest of her children, could banish from the queen's mind these her indignant broodings. The honours, the privileges, and the affection ever granted and demonstrated by the king, had no power to mollify her resentment. Her jealousy rendered her cold, contemptuous, and uncertain in her deportment; and she loved to recount, with every bitter addition, the tales borne to her respecting the preferences shown by Henriette for other cavaliers of the court. At other times her majesty broke forth into undignified invective, even adding threats when personages entered the presence, who, from their *liaison* with M. d'Enragues and his family, were likely to report her words. Madame Concini and her husband kindled this ire: having no longer need of Madame de Verneuil, Eleanore now discovered that the surest mode of retaining her sway over the mind of her mistress was to espouse her quarrel—the more so, as the anger of Henriette was less to be dreaded, owing to her frequent quarrels with the king; and to the necessity that she should not needlessly exasperate the queen. The intrigue to which Marie lent the powerful support of her name was

deemed by her subjects as little opportune as the extraordinary favours which she had once lavished on the favourite, to serve the crooked interest of Concini and his wife. During the interval between the demise of the duchesse de Beaufort, and the reign of Henriette de Balzac, pecuniary affairs had necessitated private interviews between his majesty and Madame de Villars, sister of the former. The duchesse de Villars was handsome, and *intrigante* like the rest of her sisters: and for a brief interval the king seemed fascinated by the jovial temper and ready repartee for which she was renowned. The refined and really elegant wit of Mademoiselle d'Entragues, however, soon crushed the pretensions of Madame de Villars, who from thenceforth resolved to be avenged. The prince de Joinville had been a devoted admirer of Henriette de Balzac; so much so, that he made her an offer of his hand. This young prince, though empty-headed and trifling to an insupportable degree, was wealthy and a prince of Lorraine-Guise. M. d'Entragues warmly favoured his suit, which would have elevated Henriette to rank little inferior to that of a princess of the blood. Joinville, however, met with the fate of the duke de Bellegarde when his honourable admiration clashed with the will of his royal master—a peremptory mandate forbade him to pursue his suit to Mademoiselle d'Entragues. After the royal marriage, Joinville proved the sincerity of his attachment, by again offering to espouse Madame de Verneuil, and a correspondence ensued. The jealous ire of the king, however, was speedily roused; as he

suspected his mistress of a design to withdraw from court through the medium of this marriage, to which his majesty knew that she was ardently counselled by her father, and her brother, M. d'Anvergne. Madame de Verneuil denied the intent ; and suspended her correspondence with Joinville. The young prince then fell into the artful snare laid for him by Madame de Villars, who descried, as she now hoped, a certain method of effecting the overthrow of la Marquise. By mingled cajolery and threats, she at length drew from Joinville copies of the letters recently interchanged between la Verneuil and himself. In these letters Henriette indulged in sarcastic comments relative to the king ; and in remarks very uncomplimentary to queen Marie. The prince, nevertheless, steadily denied that he had surrendered these letters ; and averred that they were fabrications of Madame de Villars. The latter, during the convalescence of the queen, made a journey to Fontainebleau, and submitted the letters, whether genuine or fabricated, to her majesty. Marie, overjoyed at such an opportunity to ruin her rival, commanded the duchess to communicate them to the king.

Madame de Villars affected reluctance, and enjoined upon the queen profound secrecy towards Mademoiselle de Guise, whom Marie still favoured ; “as the former,” the duchess said, “would find means to protect and avenge her brother, M. de Joinville.” This the queen promised ; for one of Marie’s foibles was a love of mysterious cabal. Henry, after the Christmas festival of 1602, re-

paired to Paris, to transact matters relative to the affair of the duke de Bouillon ; and to confer on the suppression of certain riotous meetings in the town of Metz, arising from the unpopularity of one M. de Sobelles, lieutenant-governor of the district. The duchess, therefore, asked audience, and prayed his majesty to meet her in a side chapel of the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, after the termination of mass on the Feast of the Epiphany. Such a request from a fair lady was never refused ; the audience, therefore, being granted, the duchess, after an artful preamble—in which she stated “that the obligations which her family owed to the king prevented her from witnessing unmoved the deceitful outrage, perpetrated by a person in whom the king believed he had reason to trust,”—handed the letters to Henry, and making her curtsy, withdrew.<sup>1</sup> The king's suspicion, meantime, had been excited while at Fontainebleau by the innuendoes of his consort, so that he had written thus to Rosny: “I quitted Paris not altogether friends with Madame de Verneuil. A report has now reached me that she sees the prince de Joinville: learn the truth of this rumour, and let me know.” Henry, therefore, was quite prepared to receive the sinister impression intended. Beside himself with anger and jealousy, the king repaired to the Arsenal to consult Rosny. The latter would have given much to have been able to affirm the truth of the report which agitated

<sup>1</sup> *Journal de ma Vie*.—Bassompierre, t. 1. Sully, liv. 25ème.—*Vie de Madame de Villars, sœur de Madame la Duchesse de Beaufort*.—Talleyrand des Réaux.

his royal master. The letters, when perused by the king and his minister, seemed to the former to be conclusive of his betrayal. Rosny, however, counselled the king to treat the matter with composure ; and to hear what Madame de Verneuil might have to allege. "Hear Madame de Verneuil!" exclaimed the king, "her tongue is so long that she will prove herself right, and that I am wrong : nevertheless, I will go, and taunt her with her perfidy !" Another relation of this fracas, however, states that the king changed his intent, and instead of repairing to the Hôtel de Soissons, his majesty sent thither the count de Lude, who had orders to show la Marquise the letters ; but not to leave them in her hands. "Say to his majesty," replied Henriette, with imperturbable coolness, "that as I have never injured him, nor knowingly given him offence, I am at a loss to account for his injurious message ; I pray that the truth may appear, and avenge me on my calumniators." Madame de Verneuil then positively denied having written the letters shown to her ; the which she pretended to trace to the disappointed suit of M. de Joinville, who wished to separate her from the king.

The affirmation was too much in accord with the king's wishes not to meet with willing belief ; and measures were eagerly taken to investigate the affair. Madame de Verneuil persisted in her statement that the letters were forged ; and she dared to add, with the consent and connivance of the queen : nevertheless, sensible of the risk she ran by challenging the veracity of a prince of the house of



Guise, she demanded that Rosny should be appointed to examine the affair, and bound herself to abide by his decision. Henry commanded his faithful friend to undertake this commission; and to repair to the hôtel of Madame la Marquise, where, on a given day, he would meet him. "The king," says Rosny, "breathed vengeance against all concerned in this affair." Joinville, meantime, by order of the king, was again subjected to severe interrogatories, relative to a charge before preferred, that he had participated in the malpractices of M. de Biron; and for which he was then suffering banishment in the castle of Dampierre. It was believed that this punishment was inflicted, owing to the determination of the king to prohibit his access to the Hôtel de Soissons. Upon the occasion of the conviction of Joinville, after perusing the minutes of the interrogatory submitted by Sillery, the king sent for the duke de Guise, and for Madame de Nemours. When those personages entered the presence, Henry said, "Behold your prodigal, who, Madame, has been guilty of innumerable follies. I shall treat him as a boy, and pardon him this time, because M. de Rosny has made intercession, and that I have a regard for you all. You will answer for his prudence." The young prince accordingly was banished to Dampierre, his mother, and brother the duke de Guise, undertaking for his good conduct. When at Dampierre, Joinville wearied the king with complaints and supplications to be allowed to return to Paris. He stated that the old castle was not furnished in style



suitable for his comfort and rank; and that the place was damp and melancholy. After the pretended revelations of Madame de Villars, Joinville obtained permission to visit Paris, though in different fashion to what he had anticipated.

Meantime, the king, attended by the duke de Montbazon, and M. de Rosny, examined the letters, in the presence of Madame de Verneuil, who appeared overwhelmed with depression “at the persecutions which she had to endure from his majesty.” The inquiry ended by a reconciliation,—Madame de Verneuil protesting that she had never written the letters which the king deemed so criminal. The affair was at length sifted to the king’s relief; one Bigot, secretary to the duke de Guise, confessed that he, having a talent for imitating hand-writing, had fabricated the letters, by the order of M. de Joinville, who sought at once to be avenged on la Marquise, and to flatter the duchess de Villars, whose favour he was desirous to obtain. The finale of this intrigue was very painful to all its unprincipled actors. Joinville escaped incarceration in the Bastille, on condition that he made a campaign in Hungary, and presumed not to approach even the frontier of France without the royal licence. Madame de Villars received a *lettre de cachet*, banishing her to a distant château; and the secretary who had forged the handwriting of Madame de Verneuil was imprisoned for a year.<sup>1</sup> The name of queen Marie was carefully guarded, but great dis-

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 25ème—these *tracasseries* are detailed at length in *Œconomies Royales*, etc. De Thou, liv. 129.

cord ensued between the royal pair; while the queen put no limit to the manifestation of her hatred and abuse of Madame de Verneuil. The latter, notwithstanding the signal chastisement inflicted on the conspirators, expressed the greatest indignation at the king's conduct in daring to suspect her; or if she had so chosen, "that his majesty should have resorted to such tyrannical means to forbid her marriage with M. de Joinville." She, therefore, shut herself up in her hôtel, and, under pretext of indisposition, refused to see his majesty before his departure for Metz; though Henry resorted to every means short of employing his authority to induce Henriette to grant the coveted interview.

The disturbances in the city of Metz, which compelled the royal presence, arose from the tyranny and unpopularity of M. de Sobelles and his brother, lieutenants of the Pays Messin, under the duke d'Epemon. The disclosures recently made relative to the practices of the Spanish court rendered the governors of all border fortresses on the alert. Secret information therefore having been communicated to MM. de Sobelles, that certain influential citizens of Metz were in communication with count Mansfeld to transfer the vicariat of the three imperial cities of Teul, Metz, and Verdun, from the French crown to that of Spain, he caused the persons so accused to be seized, and cruelly tortured. Nothing was elicited; and it was afterwards discovered that the information was false. Disputes also had arisen relative to the right of the governor to compel

the town of Metz to furnish provisions for the garrisons of the district. Dissension therefore glowed so fiercely that the duke d'Epernon repaired to the city, and tried in vain to mediate between the hostile factions. The duke, therefore, appealed to the royal authority to depose functionaries who thus rebelliously withstood the authority delegated from the crown. Many political considerations induced the king personally to intervene in the pacification of the disturbed districts, all of which were maturely considered by the astute Rosny. The stability of the loyal adherence then professed by Epernon, seems to have been considered doubtful by Rosny, and by his master: and the policy of appointing a lieutenant devoted to the royal cause had been long considered desirable. In case of war with Lorraine, the obedience of the governor of the Pays Messin became an object of moment: moreover, if Henry at any future period found himself in position to execute the grand political scheme discussed by Rosny with queen Elizabeth, the devotion of his officers placed over districts contiguous to Germany was a condition indispensable to the success of the enterprise. Henry, therefore, prepared for his expedition, which it was also decided that the queen should share. Marie's ill-humour and depression had been great since the exile of Madame de Villars; and as her health was not perfectly re-established, it was believed that the journey to Metz, and the society of Madame, who was to meet her brother, might be service-

able. So great was Henry's haste to depart and quench the spark of menaced insurrection, that leaving the queen and her ladies to follow at their leisure, he set out, attended by Villeroy, for Verdun on the 20th day of February. The day following his arrival he received an address from the heads of the Jesuit establishments of that city. The rector of the college, le P. de la Tour, pronounced an eloquent oration, in which he prayed that the order might not be banished from the district of les Trois Evechés; but rather that the college of Verdun might be honoured by his majesty's gracious patronage. The opinion of the king had changed relative to the exile of the fathers from the realm of France. The Jesuits had many powerful protectors at court, personages who possessed access to the royal ear—the most zealous amongst whom was M. de la Varenne. The repute of the educational establishments of France had suffered since the departure of the fathers: even the learned professors of the university of Paris, for lack of that sharp incentive—their jealousy of the teaching of the order—seemed to slumber. The repeal of the decree of banishment, moreover, was warmly solicited by Rome; nor was the king unobservant of the steady support afforded to French policy by the Jesuit cardinals of the Sacred College. It had also been insinuated that the ministrations of the fathers in the confessionals and pulpits of France might be converted into a powerful engine of government—being one of which his Catholic majesty profitably

availed himself—that the religious and political opinions of the fathers were immutable ; and that the youth of the country, now scattered in foreign seminaries, might be trained at home in orderly and loyal devotion to the dynasty of Bourbon, now happily orthodox. Swayed by these considerations, which Rosny himself admitted to be cogent, Henry promised his royal protection to his Jesuit petitioners ; but hinted that the rector would do well to recall the French youths then studying at the ducal seminary at Pont-à-Môusson, and enrol them again at Verdun. On leaving the presence, la Varenne privately communicated to le P. de la Tour, that his majesty not only appeared willing to patronize their college at Verdun, but seemed inclined to repeal the edict which banished the order from France. Intelligence of so important and joyful a nature was soon communicated to the heads of the banished communities, and to the order universally. A meeting was convened at Pont-à-Môusson, at which the rectors of the college of the last named place, and of Verdun, Avignon, Toulonse and Douay, drew up a petition to his majesty, praying for the restoration of their order ; and professing their loyal attachment to the government of so glorious and orthodox a monarch. This address was presented to Henry after his arrival at Metz, during the solemnities of Passion week. The fathers were introduced by la Varenne ; and Henry gave them audience attended by Villeroy and M. de Gesores. secretaries of state. They threw themselves at the

royal feet, and when commanded to rise, the provincial of the order, Father Ignatius Arnaud, pronounced an eloquent and affecting address. His majesty replied: "I have never wished evil to your order; if I bear ill will to any of your members, may such evil wish recoil on my own head! My Parliament, however, I must remember, decreed the banishment of your order, after mature and anxious deliberations." Henry then took the address and handed it to Villeroy, telling the fathers "to take heart; that he would confer with his holiness, and decide upon their petition after his return to Paris."<sup>1</sup> An answer so propitious and hopeful transported the fathers, and caused them to feel confident of their speedy re-establishment. There might have been, and doubtless was, policy in the royal response. The affair of Madame's dispensation still held its languid course, and the influence of the Jesuits was great in Rome. Discussions also pended respecting the induction to sees of various prelates, in which the king took eager interest. Queen Marie and madame la Marquise, moreover, pleaded the cause of the fathers; and perpetually lamented that France should be the only orthodox realm deprived of the learned celebrity and spiritual zeal of the order.

M. de Sobelles, meantime, on hearing of the approach of the king, prudently resigned his office, that the belief might not prevail that he was deposed therefrom. At first, Sobelles had announced

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, *Hist. de son Temps*, liv. 129. *Hist. de l'Ordre de Jésus établie en France*.

his resolve to defy the royal reforms by the help of his faction in the town; but on the remonstrance of his friends, he wisely resigned his command to la Varenne, and quitted Metz before the arrival of the court. Henry appointed M. de Montigny governor of Metz; and gave the command of the citadel to the brother of the latter, M. d'Arquien, to the great displeasure of Epernon, who was not consulted on these appointments. A brilliant court assembled in Metz to salute the sovereign of France; and many of the princes of Germany announced their intention to greet the king; and despatched officers to prepare abodes in Metz. His majesty, however, caused it to be intimated through his ambassadors, that his sojourn in Lorraine was not likely to exceed the interval of a week; nevertheless, a hearty welcome in Paris would await any of the princes so courteously inclined. The sovereigns, therefore, whose states lay distant from the French frontier relinquished their intent; but Maurice Landgrave of Hesse, Philip duke de Neubourg, the duke de Deux Ponts and his mother, and the prince of Pomerania, visited Metz. Madame also joined the French court, accompanied by her father-in-law, the duke of Lorraine.

The great festivity of this courtly assemblage was the marriage of Catherine de Rohan with the duke de Deux Ponts, an illustrious alliance, worthy of the virtue and accomplishments of the bride. Henry himself had been once fascinated by the attractions of Mademoiselle de Rohan; but received a response in



answer to his solicitations, which, as in the case of Madame de Guercheville, he never forgot, and recompensed by the subsequent negotiation of so princely an alliance. The queen, rescued from the evil influence of the proximity of Madame de Verneuil, gained popularity; her magnificence and sprightly manners made a great impression on the German princes. Marie entertained a sincere regard for the duchess de Bar, who also found the queen a congenial companion. These royal ladies read together, and mutually confided their domestic grievances; while they agreed in love of splendid attire—a taste which often puzzled the stern Duplessis Mornay, who alluded to it as the only anomaly in the vigorous mind of Catherine d'Albret. Many letters exist written by Marie to Madame; in all of which the queen makes professions of love and regard, and expresses regret at the distant abode of the latter, whose society would have bestowed “infinite consolation.” At the earnest request of Madame, the king consented to visit Nancy; for his majesty was far from feeling content at the domestic position of his sister, and was touched by her visible depression. A magnificent ballet was danced on the evening following the royal arrival at Nancy. The figure was designed by Madame, and was intended to represent the letters which formed the name of Henri. “Well, sire,” said the duchess, “do you discern the honour we have paid you?” His majesty, however, professed ignorance; and when the device was explained, exclaimed—“*Ventre St. Gris, ma sœur*, your pen-



manship, to my mind, is not of the clearest!"

The duke de Lorraine, and his son, M. de Bar, meantime disturbed the royal pastimes by their complaints and lamentation at the obstinacy of Madame. These reproaches were the more keen, inasmuch as the physicians of the duchess having pronounced that she was likely to give an heir to the duchy at the commencement of the year, now avowed themselves mistaken in that assertion, and began to treat Madame for dropsy—a malady under which she had, in reality, long been ailing. M. de Bar, however, attributed his disappointment to diabolical agencies; and consulted his theologians upon the policy of exorcising the evil spirit which haunted his consort. The alienation between the royal pair revived with tenfold bitterness. M. de Bar abandoned the palace; and bewailed his sinful disregard of the papal mandate, which had decreed his separation from a princess so contumacious. Madame was compelled to hold her *prêche* with closed doors; and to admit only those personages to the service who held a warrant from the duke of Lorraine. The duchess passionately desired the blessing of offspring; and it is averred, increased her malady by refusing to take the remedies prescribed by her physicians, being harassed by the dread lest M. de Bar had resorted to that pretext to prevent the birth of children anathematized before their entrance into the world. The domestic griefs of Madame produced no impression at Rome; but her contumacy was discussed with wonder. M. de Beauvau, on behalf of the duke of

Lorraine and his son, and cardinal d'Ossat, and the count de Béthune for Henri Quatre, besieged the consistory with petitions and supplications that dispensation legalizing the marriage might be granted. Clement showed an anxious desire to oblige king Henry ; especially since the placable disposition manifested by the latter towards the Jesuits. The majority of members of the Sacred College, however, peremptorily opposed the demand; and his holiness declared that he felt reluctance in an affair of such moment to exercise his supreme pontifical power. A meeting of the members of consistory, therefore, assembled on the 5th of September, 1602, to debate the matter ; which was done with tedious minuteness, all the past arguments and mandates undergoing careful repetition and revision. Three cardinals alone opined in favour of the prayer of the petitioners,—cardinals d'Ossat, Baronio, and Manteca. M. d'Ossat set forth in forcible language the scandal and conflicts likely to ensue did the Holy See maintain its prohibition. “No, Monseigneur,” replied the cardinals hostile to the concession, “the repudiation of this heretic princess will neither cause war nor tumult. M. de Bar has done all in his power to convert the said lady, and even made pilgrimage to Rome to obtain dispensation ; the king therefore, so just and moderate in all his actions, will never declare unjust war against a prince who, after four years of mortal anguish, shall seek to save his soul and quiet his conscience by refraining from mortal sin!”

The congregation, therefore, voted the following resolution, which was referred for the ratification of the pope, "that his holiness should immediately address a brief to some eminent prelate in France, to the cardinal de Lorraine it might be proposed, authorizing the said prelate to issue instant dispensation on the abjuration of Madame, without further application to the Holy See; so that the duchess at any moment might have the power of rendering legitimate her marriage, or her child, in case offspring should be granted to the said lady." The pope highly approved of the expedient; and sent to communicate the result of the deliberation to the French ambassador, M. de Béthune. D'Ossat, however, early sought conference with the latter; and together these eminent statesmen discussed the matter. To accept the dispensation in the form and under the conditions offered, would, they felt, greatly increase the odium which Madame's refusal to change her faith incurred. A grace always within her reach, and by the acceptance of which she might content her husband, brother, and father-in-law, would, if still rejected, render Madame's position at the court of Nancy insupportable. The duke de Bar, in the opinion of his subjects, would thereby be furnished with an unanswerable plea for forsaking his consort: as, the welfare of the duchy demanded the succession of a race of legitimate princes, whose right should be beyond contest. The count de Béthune, therefore, declined to accept dispensation in such form on

behalf of Madame, and of king Henry.<sup>1</sup> In the Vatican the ambassador met M. de Beauvau, who had already signified the assent of the duke de Bar to the proposition; and who seemed greatly disconcerted at the resolve of the minister and his confederate d'Ossat. "Do not imagine, nevertheless, that the pope will grant dispensation *pure et simple* against the advice of his cardinals," writes d'Ossat to Villeroy. "Madame should step in to our help; she has the remedy in her power, and can at any time relieve us from solicitude, also M. her husband, the people of the duchy of Lorraine, the king, the pope, and the church catholic. If the said lady cannot submit to the teaching and authority of the church, the pope esteems that he has still less reason to exercise his authority and compromise his dignity, to satisfy the passion and error of a misguided woman, against the counsel of his consistory."<sup>2</sup> Clement, after giving audience to Henry's ambassadors, left Rome for Frascati to spend several weeks, during which he adjourned further debate on the matter of the dispensation. The reason of the retreat of his holiness was supposed to be a disinclination to conclude this affair, except on condition of the recantation of the duchess, until he learned the royal decision respecting the exiled Jesuit communities. Meantime the health and spirits of Madame became more depressed; a languid melancholy oppressed her, and, after the departure of the French court from Nancy, she passed her time in solitude, occu-

<sup>1</sup> Lettres d'Ossat,—Lettres 326, 7, 8, et seq.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid, t. 5.

pied alternately by prayer and needlework. Her greatest solace was the society of madame de Rohan, who, perceiving that the heresy of the duchess deprived her of most of the courtly privileges due to a person of her exalted rank, passed much of her time at Nancy, in order "to suffer misery and persecution with Madame."

Whilst the king was in Lorraine he received a despatch from the Elector Palatine, brother-in-law of the duke de Bouillon, in extenuation of the flight of the latter; and asserting also the belief of the Landgrave of Hesse in the duke's loyal attachment towards his majesty. Henry immediately replied to this letter: the king expressed his conviction of the innocence of the duke, "whose rank, descent, and the gratitude which he owed for countless benefits, seemed to render the charge of treason incredible." "It was owing to such conviction that I desired to speak with M. de Bouillon in private; his refusal to give me the opportunity for this interview has, I do not deny, infused unpleasant doubts in my mind. Nevertheless, as you interest yourself in the welfare of the duke, I am willing to forget the past, and to receive M. de Bouillon with my accustomed favour, provided that within two months from this period he appears at my court, and tenders to me his justification from the charges alleged. I pray you, *mon cousin*, to inform the said duke with your own lips of this my unalterable decision."

The most powerful and indulgent of the friends of the duke de Bouillon was at this period removed

by death. On the 3d day of April, 1603, queen Elizabeth expired at her palace in Richmond—a death which elicited in all the courts of Europe sensations either of intense joy, or of profound regret. The failing health of the queen had long proved a source of solicitude to her old ally and friend, Henry IV., who received the intelligence of her hopeless condition at Metz, after his return from Naney. Henry recommends his ambassador to pay assiduous attention to the dying queen; to visit Richmond daily; and to refrain from embarrassing the English council by appearing to favour any faction in particular. In case of the demise of the queen, Henry commands his ambassador to wait upon the king of Scotland, and offer his majesty congratulations; and if the condition of parties seemed to menace his peaceful accession to the English crown, to promise the alliance and aid of France. Henry stated that he considered the cause of Lady Arabella Stuart hopeless; for “the English Roman Catholics were disunited, devoid of foreign alliances, and governed by local faction.” Beaumont in his despatches sends to his royal master a minute detail of the circumstances of the queen’s illness, and of the rumours and political agitation of the English court. The news of the death of Elizabeth reached his majesty on the 11th of April—the letter of the ambassador having been despatched on the evening of the 3rd of April. Queen Marie suspended her receptions at Metz, and prepared to return to Paris. A court mourning was commanded; and every possible mark of respect was paid to the memory of the

queen. Henry sincerely mourned his old ally. "Her loss was irreparable for Europe, and for our king especially," writes Sully. "Henry could scarcely hope to find in her successor the same friendly dispositions; for this great princess, as the king expressed himself in the letters he despatched to me to notify the event, was the irreconcilable enemy of his irreconcilable enemies, and his second self."<sup>1</sup> "This great queen, like Augustus, ended a happy life by a calm and painless death," writes the historian de Thou, the contemporary and devoted admirer of Elizabeth's policy. "There was nothing mournful, nothing to regret, no evil presage to deplore at the termination of her career. It is true, that a few days before her demise her nerves, being enfeebled and exhausted, contracted; her voice became scarcely audible; and her body appeared heavy and torpid. On the 4th of April, or on the 24th of March old style, while in a deep faint, she terminated her life at Richmond, at four o'clock in the morning."<sup>2</sup> Henry wrote to his ambassador in London thus:—

*Henry IV. to M. de Beaumont.*<sup>3</sup>

"MONS. DE BEAUMONT—I have learned by your letter written on the third of this month, which I received

<sup>1</sup> *Œconomies Royales*, chap. 15.

<sup>2</sup> De Thou, liv. 129. Anne d'Esté, duchesse de Nemours, declared, "que la reine d'Angleterre était la plus glorieuse et la plus heureuse de toutes les femmes qui ayent jamais porté la couronne."

<sup>3</sup> Bibl. Imp. F. de Brienne, MS. 39, fol. 20.



yesterday, the death of the queen of England, my good sister and cousin, at which news I truly felt great depression, having lost in her the best and most sincere sister and neighbour that I had, and towards whom I bore the utmost respect and affection. But as God has been pleased so to ordain, I thank him that he vouchsafed to render her end calm and prosperous as has been her reign ; also, that he has been pleased to inspire the nation with the unanimous resolve to call the king of Scotland, my good brother, to the succession of the crown and realm of England, as you notify to me by your letter. This resolve is the most judicious, honourable, and wise that it is possible for people to take ; and it is an action of faithful prudence, for which I shall esteem and revere the nation in greater degree, as you will intimate to some of the chief personages of the realm. I pray God, M. de Beaumont, to have you in his holy keeping.

“ HENRY.”

The king on the following day wrote to king James, to congratulate him on his happy and pacific accession. The character of the new king was a puzzling combination, which Henry greatly desired to analyse. The French ambassador in Edinburgh <sup>1</sup> had at different times edified his court by details of the king's quaint oddities of character. M. de la Tour described the Scottish king as cunningly cautious, given to sly questions and jests, and of having a way peculiar to himself in most matters. He was well read in classical lore, and deemed himself a profound theologian. La Tour stated that his majesty was very

<sup>1</sup> M. de la Tour.



well affected towards the French and their king; nevertheless, divers importunate persons had insinuated that Henry was ready to aid the faction opposing his right to Elizabeth's succession. King James in his conjugal relations affected a patronising and resigned air, and loved to moralise on the frivolities which monopolized his consort; nevertheless, the ambassador stated that queen Anne had generally her own way, and paid but slender deference to the counsels of her liege lord, when such clashed with her own wayward will. The queen was suspected, moreover, of favouring the Roman Catholic faith; although from her earliest youth she had been brought up in the Lutheran confession. King Henry felt an anxious desire to conciliate the new sovereigns. Although the power of the League was extinct, and Philip III. reigned over Spain, yet the alliance of England appeared to the king a necessary adjunct of his policy at home and abroad. In France the Huguenots still retained their power, and were ready to take arms, on the slightest provocation, for the better confirmation of their privileges; and in the event of an outbreak they looked to England for aid and countenance. Bouillon, their head and leader, being, as it was alleged, unjustly exiled, rendered the churches more ready to accept the shield of foreign protection. The hardly-won liberties of the Dutch republic were also menaced, if king James yielded to the bribes and blandishments of Spain, and signed a treaty with Philip III., to bring about which Spanish agents had long intrigued. The consort of king James was known

to cherish Spanish predilections ; and she was supposed to have listened complacently to the proposal of the ambassador, that a future alliance might unite the prince of Wales and the infanta lately born to Spain. To anticipate these the designs of the enemies of France, Henry summoned his trusty minister Rosny to conference, having resolved to despatch him as ambassador extraordinary to compliment James on his accession ; and to renew, if possible, the alliance which had subsisted during the reign of Elizabeth. “I was the only person in France capable of undertaking this important mission,” writes Rosny. “I hazard this assertion on the word of the king, and because it was requisite to confer upon matters of which I alone had cognizance. My religion, moreover, disposed the new king to receive me favourably, and to give me access to his presence.” The conference between Henry and his minister took place at the Château de Montglat. The important affairs to be treated with the English council formed the burden of the conference. No sooner were the eyes of Elizabeth closed, than Juan Baptiste Taxis, conde de Villamediana, Philip’s ambassador in Paris, commenced his intrigues to win over the English ministry to intimate relations with Spain. No time, therefore, was to be lost before initiating king James into the secret of the confederation against the power of the Spanish and Austrian Hapsburgs, discussed between Elizabeth and Rosny at Dover ; and to induce the king to sign a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, between the crowns. Henry, there-

fore, proposed that the mission of M. de Rosny should be one ostensibly of simple compliment on the accession of king James ; but that, privately, he should insinuate himself into the confidence of the latter, and broach the subject of the alliance, and its important details, as opportunity might occur. "By such arrangement my honour and that of France will receive no stain ; as, should his majesty not evince desire to enter into such relations, no formal overtures will have been made," said the king. Rosny, however, looked grave at this proposal ; he was aware of the intense jealousy which his favour inspired ; and that a trifling incident had served on many occasions for the overthrow of influence not less potent. Should king James not vindicate on this occasion his repute for discretion, by imparting to the Spanish ambassador in London the proposed treaty hostile to the dominance over Europe of Spain and Austria, the indignant protests of the Spanish cabinet would resound in Paris ; and Rosny, called before the privy-council to explain overtures for which no authority existed in his credentials, might find himself in a position difficult to defend. In the embarrassments occasioned by the resentment and reproaches of Philip III. and the emperor, Henry might possibly be induced to disavow intentions so hostile ; when the ruin or the temporary exile of the minister must of necessity ensue. Rosny, therefore, asked for three days to consider the proposal. At the expiration of this period he declined the mission, unless his majesty

gave him letters under his own hand, approving of any political communication he might make to his Britannic majesty—a document which was to be regarded as private between the king and his minister, to be used by the latter only in extremity, for his own possible justification. Henry magnanimously consented; and with his own hand drew up ample authority to vindicate his minister against future cabal. Power was distinctly intrusted to Rosny to communicate to king James the project for the future division of Europe according to the plan proposed by and discussed with his predecessor. Rosny was even permitted “to show himself zealously inclined towards the reformed faith; and was authorised to assure the king that the welfare of the churches was dearer to him than the political prosperity of orthodox France and her king.” James was to be requested to keep the propositions secret; especially from the ambassadors of Spain, Austria, and of Bavaria. The terms of the public credentials of M. de Rosny were to be discussed as usual by the privy council, which his majesty summoned for the purpose to meet during the month at Fontainebleau.<sup>1</sup>

From Montglat Henry journeyed to Fontainebleau, where he arrived on the 17th of April. The queen travelled by slow stages from Metz to Paris; and halted *en route* to receive the homage of the authorities in the various jurisdictions through which her journey lay. The “buildings,” at all the

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 14ème.

chief palaces, absorbed the king's attention. During the wars of the League most of the decorated *façades* of the palaces, the gardens, and the houses and lodges of the retainers and overseers of the royal domains, had fallen into ruin. Many public works required vast expenditure : during the past years of anarchy no new roads had been constructed ; bridges had fallen from decay ; the streets of Paris were impassable in winter ; and the drainage of the Louvre was in such condition that the health of the royal family was endangered whenever the court sojourned there. The ruinous condition of the Louvre, therefore, often compelled the queen to take up her abode in the sumptuous palace of M. Zamet, or in the Hôtel de Gondi ; a condescension which Marie's pride would gladly have avoided. At this period Henry was building at Fontainebleau the Salle de la Belle Cheminée ; at St. Germain, the foundation of a new palace was being laid ; and the design was under discussion of the terraces which to this day command public admiration. Great improvements were carried on at the Arsenal under the vigilant eye of Rosny ; the Louvre was filled with workmen ; architects and masons were employed in the construction of the gallery which was to unite that palace to the Tuileries ; and artists painted the ceilings and walls of the state apartments, and of the suite allotted to the queen. The king also established a manufacture of tapestry in the Faubourg St. Marceau ; the porcelain manufactures at Nevers and Brissambourg likewise received

royal patronage, and the aid of a substantial loan. These potteries were once flourishing works, but had fallen during the wars; while the impoverishment of their owners was too complete to admit of the resumption of business without aid from the treasury. The glass manufactures established at St. Germain by Henry II. were moreover re-opened, and fresh impetus given to that trade. The beautiful galleries of the palace of Diane de Poitiers at Anet, had been lined with superb mirrors from the works at St. Germain; for Henry II. had sent for skilled Venetian workmen and established them in the vicinity of his palace. Francis I. patronised most, amongst the branches of national industry, his silk weavers of Lyons, and his china manufactures; Henry II., his glassworks of St. Germain; the interest of Henri Quatre chiefly centred on a new branch of industry—the rearing of silkworms in France, for which he ordered extensive plantations of mulberry trees at Pau, and in Provence, and at St. Germain. The experiment had been partially tried by Francis I., but the establishment formed in that reign at Tours was carried on at the commencement of the reign of Henri Quatre by private enterprise, though with little success. The king confided the superintendence of his silkworms to one Mainfroy Balbani: his majesty sent this agent to Valencia to procure large quantities of eggs; and caused chambers to be prepared at Fontainebleau and the Tuileries for the hatching process. Eventually the establishment was removed to queen

Marguerite's château of Madrid, in the Bois de Boulogne. The queen, in a letter addressed to one of her friends, complains that the apartments of her château were partitioned into "dusty *cabanes*" "for the rearing of his majesty's worms." It was the intimation conveyed by the appropriation of her palace, that Marguerite was not expected yet awhile in Paris, which displeased the queen, rather than that she grudged the loan of the château.

The privy council summoned by the king met at Fontainebleau, to debate on the terms of the credentials to be granted to Rosny for his ambassage to Great Britain. The appointment was not one which gave satisfaction to MM. du Conseil:—nevertheless, as the policy of the nomination had not been submitted by his majesty to his ministers, the latter avenged themselves by limiting the powers conferred by the letters of credence to the strictest possible proportions. Henry then quitted Fontainebleau, and travelled post to Paris, accompanied by two cavaliers only. His object was to visit Madame de Verneuil, who had just given birth to a daughter. Henriette still continued perverse and indifferent, and had scarcely deigned to respond to Henry's letters during the sojourn of the court at Metz. The queen, meantime, arrived in Paris, and had taken up her abode at the Hôtel de Gondî. The king's first visit being paid to Madame de Verneuil renewed in the queen's heart the latent animosity against her rival, allayed by her undisputed pre-eminence during the journey through Lorraine. Henry found the beauty of his



mistress still fascinating; and quitted her hôtel more infatuated and determined to persevere in his *liaison*, though Madame de Verneuil had earnestly supplicated for dismissal. This prayer was seconded by M. d'Entragues and by the count d'Auvergne, and there is every reason to believe in the sincerity of the petition. The jealousy demonstrated by the queen and her threats intimidated even Madame la Marquise;—in case of the sudden demise of the king, the peril became great. The relations of Madame de Verneuil—especially the duke of Lenox and his mother, the sister of M. d'Entragues—were earnest in their expostulations; and counselled her to withdraw from the court of France. They represented that Madame de Verneuil, with her beauty and wealth, would yet find noble suitors, when a dread of royal revenge should no longer intervene. On this point Henriette had few misgivings—the prince de Joinville was already at her feet—while the duke de Montbazou proclaimed himself her champion, and ready to do battle against all her maligners. It was Henry's conviction of the sincerity of his mistress's demands, which rendered his refusal of her suit so peremptory; indeed, his majesty demonstrated such marked displeasure towards the marquis d'Entragues and M. d'Auvergne, whom he suspected of abetting her designs, as warned these noblemen of the expediency of taking temporary leave of the court. As soon as Madame de Verneuil was sufficiently recovered, she departed for Verneuil, while their majesties repaired to Fontainebleau. Henry had no



sooner arrived at this his favourite palace, about the 17th of May, than he fell ill from a sharp attack of the malady to which he was constantly subject. The progress of the disorder was so rapid that the physicians despaired of effecting a cure; and plainly informed the queen that his majesty could survive only forty-eight hours. Henry himself believed his case hopeless; his first thought was for his dauphin and his realm; his second for Madame de Verneuil and her children. Expresses were despatched to summon the count d'Auvergne, and Rosny, who was in Paris, busily superintending the preparations for his embassy to London. The letters were dictated by the king from his bed to M. de Lomenie. That addressed to Rosny is as follows:

*The King to M. de Rosny.*<sup>1</sup>

“Mon amy: I feel so ill that in all probability God is about to summon me. As it is my duty, after the care of my salvation, to secure the succession of my crown and realm to my children, so that my son may commence his reign prosperously, to the benefit of my wife, my kingdom, my friends, and my subjects, whom I love as children, I desire to confer with you before resolving upon any measures. Therefore, hasten hither, without giving alarm, or confiding your inten-

<sup>1</sup> (Economies Royales, chap. 15. “Le roy,” relates Sully, “fortement persuadé lui-même que sa dernière heure n’était pas éloignée, et résolu de partager le peu d’instants qu’il croyait avoir à vivre entre le soin de son cœur et celui de son état, se tourna avec ferveur vers Dieu, et dicta cette lettre qui me fut envoyée en toute diligence à Paris.”)

tion to any person. Appear as if you were going to attend *la prêche* at Ablon ; and having first sent forward post-horses, come here to-day.

“HENRY.”

The anguish of Rosny was indescribable:—half an hour after receiving the missive he was *en route* for Fontainebleau. On his arrival the king was reported to be worse ; the inmates of the palace moved about in gloomy depression, while the manner of M. de la Rivière confirmed his dire apprehensions. Rosny was instantly admitted to the sick-chamber. The queen was sitting at the head of the bed, holding one of the king’s hands clasped within her own. “Embrace me, *mon amy*,” exclaimed Henry, as his good and devoted subject knelt by the couch ; “I am marvellously glad of your presence. It is singular, but two hours after I sent for you I felt slight relief.” Turning towards the queen, Henry said : “Madame, in the event of my demise, this is the servant who will serve you and your children best ; he knows my affairs, and possesses all my confidence. I am aware that his temper is hard and austere, and sometimes he speaks more freely than a woman of your temper can endure : nevertheless, if you neglect him and employ”—here the king whispered a name in her majesty’s ear—“you will ruin this realm, and be the cause of the perdition of this crown, and of your own prosperity and honour.” The king then took up a miniature of the infant dauphin, which lay on his bed ; tears streamed down Henry’s

cheeks as he contemplated the child. "Ah! poor little one!" exclaimed he, "evil days are at hand for you, if it be the will of God to take me!" Marie then rose, sobbing bitterly, and retired into her oratory, attended by Madame Concini, as la Rivière and his colleagues entered.<sup>1</sup> The report of the physicians was more favourable; and while Rosny, by his majesty's commands, repaired to impart the intelligence to the queen, M. d'Auvergne was summoned to the royal chamber. The king apprised the count of his dangerous condition, which, although ameliorated within the last few hours, was still precarious. Henry then alluded to the animosity manifested by the queen against Madame de Verneuil; and sorrowfully stated his conviction that she would proceed to extreme measures to avenge herself on her rival so soon as she had the power. He, therefore, had sent for M. d'Auvergne to empower him to make request in his royal name to Taxis, the Spanish ambassador, that so soon as his death was ascertained, to take Madame de Verneuil and her children under the protection of Spain; and secure to Henriette, who was then at the château de Verneuil, a retreat in the town of Cambray. M. d'Auvergne hesitated; he drew a piteous picture of the desolation of his sister's position in the event of his majesty's demise, exposed—as she would be—to the vehement hate and persecutions of the queen; but

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 14ème. *Journal de ma Vie*—Bassompierre. Etoile—*Journal de Henri IV.* *Vie de Henriette de Balzac*, Marquise de Verneuil—Dreux du Radier, t. 6.

finally declined to undertake the mission to M. de Taxis, unless the king gave him a written warrant for such proceeding. "The Bastille, your majesty, has taught me prudence; the anger of the queen in case of the extremity to which you allude—and from which may God deliver us—would be concentrated on me and mine, unless I could prove that in this affair I simply did my duty by obeying your command." Henry was too ill to debate the point; and too anxious for the safety of Madame de Verneuil to consult Rosny. He therefore signed a paper authorising d'Auvergne to hold conference with the conde de Villamediana, on certain secret subjects approved and sanctioned by himself. The count immediately set out for Paris, obtained audience of Taxis, and received the ambassador's promise to protect and favour the flight of the Marquise and her children from France; to give them refuge in Cambray, and to transport them to Dover on board one of the ships of his Catholic majesty.<sup>1</sup> M. d'Auvergne, when he returned to Fontainebleau, was greeted by the news that a favourable change had occurred during the night, and that his majesty was considered to be in a fair way towards recovery. During the day, Henry gave audience to the count, and feeling gratified by the prompt acquiescence of Taxis, wrote a few courteous lines of thanks—also giving the ambassador the satisfactory intelligence of his own improved health. M. d'Auvergne then plausibly requested permission to retain the order signed by the

<sup>1</sup> Vittorio Siri—*Memorie Recondite*, vol. i., p. 295, et seq.

king, commanding him to hold private conference with Taxis, feigning great dread “of the stern suspicion of M. de Rosny, and of the clamour queen Marie was likely to raise should she ever discover the purport of his mysterious visit to the Spanish embassy.” Henry assented, not divining the guileful use to which M. d’Auvergne eventually intended to convert a mandate granted for the protection of the Balzac family. Rosny leaves no record of the purport of the political conferences which he held with the king on the day of his arrival. The resolutions, however, were doubtless the same as the king and his faithful counsellor subsequently arranged in the event of that calamity—his majesty’s sudden demise; the proclamation of Marie de Medici as regent of France; and the nomination of a council of regency, of which Rosny was to be president. Henry’s return to health was rapid; but by the advice of his physicians he quitted Fontainebleau for the more salubrious air of St. Germain, after giving audience to M. de la Tour, his ambassador in Edinburgh—who brought the king a friendly letter from king James, with the formal notification of the accession of the latter to the crown of England.

## CHAPTER II.

1603—1604.

Accession of King James I. of England—Policy of the English cabinet—Character of the king—Designs of Spain—Ambassage of Rosny to England—Details—The count de Soissons—His pecuniary rapacity—Avarice of Madame de Verneuil—Quarrel between Rosny and M. de Soissons—Alienation between the king and queen—Its causes.—Intrigues of MM. d'Auvergne and d'Entragues, and Madame de Verneuil with the Spanish ambassador—Nature and objects of the conspiracy—Madame de Verneuil refuses to surrender the written promise of marriage given to her by the king—Re-establishment of the Jesuits in France—Opposition manifested by the parliament of Paris—The members are compelled to register the edict—Attempt to assassinate le Père Cotton—Escapade of the royal pages—Unpopularity of the Order.

THE demise of queen Elizabeth suspended the policy of every cabinet in Europe. The alliance of England— anxiously sought by each of the great contending powers, Spain, France, and Austria— conferred continental supremacy. Subtle and numerous, therefore, were the intrigues resorted to by the ministers of each of these realms to forestall the ambassadors of the other, and to be beforehand

in winning the much-coveted alliance. King James, on his accession, was beset with more flattery and blandishments than had fallen to the lot of any sovereign of the age, which homage greatly enhanced his already exalted notions of kingly prerogative and right. Outwardly all James's sympathies tended towards a Spanish alliance. Philip II. had befriended Mary Stuart during her dreary captivity; and had even sent the great Armada to avenge her death by dethroning the heretic Elizabeth Tudor. The revolt of the seven Dutch provinces from the Spanish sceptre James had been heard to stigmatize as heinous rebellion against the rights of kings; and the obedience due from subjects to their rulers. It was therefore feared that the king would withdraw from the support of the States of Holland; demand the repayment of the loans granted by his predecessor; but perhaps, as a great concession, offer to prince Maurice his mediation with the archdukes. Moreover, the Spanish cabinet held a clue to the intrigue afloat for the proclamation of Arabella Stuart as queen of England on her marriage with Odoardo Farnese; which plot had been some time previously concocted in Rome, and which it was believed had ardent partisans amongst some of the chief personages of that realm. James, in his anxiety to unite his hereditary kingdom of Scotland with the potent realm of England, was capable, it was apprehended, of concluding that alliance which afforded him the best prospect of a peaceable accession; and the most efficient co-operation in coercing the unruly factions of Roman

Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans, each of which struggled for ascendancy in the state. The friendship of king James was eagerly coveted by Henri Quatre, and by his minister Rosny. The alliance offensive and defensive ratified with England, Henry might defy the enmity of the Spanish cabinet; while such compact secured the domestic tranquillity of France. The Huguenots of the realm were exasperated by the exile of Bonillon—a discontent fomented by the duke de la Trimouille and by Duplessis Mornay, who in his zeal for reform deemed himself exonerated from loyal fidelity towards his early benefactor. “I have heard,” wrote the king, “that MM. de Bonillon, la Trimouille, and du Plessis are treating with the new king to declare him protector of my French Huguenots; and to solicit the said king to appoint the Count Palatine as his lieutenant for France—in short, these three men are acting worse than they have ever before done!” Such was one of the reasons which rendered the king eager for the alliance. A second cause was uncertainty relative to the destination of a great armament fitting out in the port of Lisbon for the transport of 20,000 men; and which, at this period, was on the point of sailing. The Spanish cabinet proclaimed that its destination was Africa; and its object, to punish the treachery of the Algerine governor, and to repress piratical landings on the coasts of Naples and Andalusia. So threatening a demonstration, however, boded an expedition of greater moment than the chase of a Corsair fleet. The French council,



apprehensive of a landing on the coasts of Provence, according to the original design of the courts of Spain and Savoy, developed on the trial of the marshal de Biron, commanded extraordinary precautions. Lesdiguières received commands vigilantly to watch the passage and demeanour of a *corps d'armée* about to traverse Franche Comté *en route* for the Low Countries, to reinforce the army of the archdukes; while the duke de Bellegarde held guard on the frontiers of Burgundy, the battle-field from whence the valiant king had chased the constable of Castile Velasco and his hosts. Other personages likely to be well informed averred that the fleet was to bombard Ostend. A third source of anxiety to the ministers most in his majesty's confidence, Rosny, Villeroy, and de Loménie, was the suspected intrigues of M. d'Entragues, who, through his nephew the duke of Lenox, was accused of seeking to interest king James in the alleged rights of Madame de Verneuil to the crown matrimonial of France; so that one of the articles of a league offensive and defensive between Spain and England should be the recognition of the son of Henriette as dauphin, and future sovereign of France. The ambassador of the archduchess infanta, the count d'Arenberg, was the first foreign envoy who complimented king James after his arrival at Theobalds,<sup>1</sup> on the 18th of May, 1603. Barneveld, envoy from the States of Holland, sent

<sup>1</sup> The seat of the secretary, Robert Cecil, second son of Lord Burleigh. James afterwards gave Cecil the mansion and estate of Hatfield in exchange for Theobalds.

an intimation to king Henry concerning the propositions which Aremberg was empowered to propose on behalf of his Catholic majesty, pending the arrival of an envoy direct from Madrid. On condition that king James renewed the ancient alliance and confederation subsisting between the house of Burgundy and the English crown, and promised strict neutrality as regarded the war in the Netherlands, Philip III. offered to furnish a fleet, an army, and a subsidy which should suffice to conquer back from France the rich appanages and conquests of the Plantagenets; and was ready to covenant never to make peace with the French king, until such provinces should be united again to the territories of Great Britain. The lure was a tempting one, and Henry discerned how greatly the French alliance was threatened by the wiles of his enemy. No delay therefore was made in despatching the astute Rosny to the scene of diplomatic conflict. A cipher was agreed upon, in which all despatches intended for the joint perusal of the king and council were to be written; a second cipher was also given by Rosny to Henry, the key to which remained only in his majesty's hands. The equipage of the ambassador was magnificent; he was attended by a suite of 200 gentlemen, and departed from Paris on the 7th day of June, 1603. At Calais a squadron, of two large English frigates, six Dutch galleys, and six French vessels of war, under Dominique de Vic, vice-admiral of France, lay at anchor for the embarkation of the ambassador and his train. On the 15th, Rosny went on

board the English flagship, which sailed out of harbour by six in the morning. His equipage and the suite were conveyed across the channel in the remaining vessels. His reception by the English on board was highly reverential; and he was induced, from witnessing the respect paid to him, to entertain sanguine hopes of the success of his ambassadorship. About two o'clock the squadron entered Dover roads, and the admiral of the French squadron parted company with the flagship, leaving the ambassador on board, and made sail to land the baggage and part of the suite. Having achieved this, de Vic returned; when passing Rosny's ship, on the deck of which stood the ambassador, he fired a salute and unfurled the banner of France at the main. No sooner did the captain of the vessel behold this manœuvre, than "he fell into a fury, and, with an oath, fired into the French ship." "These Englishmen," writes Rosny, "before so courteous, became infuriated, and what I found most intolerable was, that 50 cannons were turned upon our ship. I had the greatest trouble to make myself heard when I explained that the act of de Vic was intended solely to do me honour; in token of which the flag would be lowered on my signal."<sup>1</sup> The prudent Rosny hastened to give

<sup>1</sup> "It may be," writes Cecil to Sir Thomas Parry, "you will hear of some small accident fallen out in Dover roads, between M. de Vic and a captain of one of his majesty's ships, not because it is likely to be misconstrued by the French, but it is not amiss you do understand the particulars. The captain of his majesty's ship having aboard her M. de Rosny, espied at sea that M. de Vic's ship did bear

this signal; the affair, however, exasperated the French officers, who deemed the menace of the English captain insolent and hostile. De Vic accordingly landed at Dover, and made a complaint of the insult to the admiral of the port, and demanded redress. "The said de Vic lowered his flag, muttering vengeance against the English, and vowing to be avenged on the first opportunity," says Rosny. The English admiral properly repudiated the violence of his subordinate, and made many excuses for the occurrence: this reparation, and Rosny's politic deportment, effectually calmed the irritation felt by the parties aggrieved. The affair, luckily, was suffered to drop, after king James had expressed to the ambassador his regret at the occurrence. In the hands of a less skilful minister, an untimely rupture between the crowns might have ensued.

Rosny landed at three o'clock in the afternoon. He was received by the French ambassador, M. de Beaumont, and by the master of the ceremonies of the court of Great Britain. Rosny received cour-

up the arms of France, contrary to the customs of the narrow seas: nevertheless he did forbear to challenge him, for thinking he would have taken it in when he should come near to the shore of England; but contrary to his expectation, finding him bear it still, even into Dover road, discharged a piece of ordnance at him, and so constrained him to strike his flag, which made M. de Vic return home a little discontentedly: this is the truth of the matter, although it be not worth speaking of, yet if it be looked into, we shall have reason to stand upon it." June 10, 1604. MS. Cotton. Calig. E, fol. 192.

teous welcome from the authorities and people of Dover. The governor of Dover Castle, Sir Thomas Weymss, sent to excuse himself to the ambassador for not being present at his reception, on account of an attack of gout which confined him to his bed, making an earnest request that Rosny would inspect the fortress. Rosny suffered this invitation to be twice repeated before he accepted it; not desiring to show too much alacrity to survey the castle. The governor received the ambassador with cordiality; though payment of the fee for inspecting the fortress was exacted from all the cavaliers of the suite; which, as they had repaired thither by invitation, was regarded as a signal discourtesy. The sword of each cavalier also was taken from him on entering the precincts of the castle. Such, however, was the discipline maintained by Rosny, that the cavaliers silently submitted, having previously received commands not to make any demonstration whatever. Rosny conversed for an interval with Sir Thomas Weymss; but the latter showed evident reluctance to allow the French to go over the fortifications, "making a grimace if any one of us even lifted his eyes to survey the walls and towers of his castle." The prudent statesman therefore immediately took leave, under the plausible pretext that the governor was too indisposed to be incommoded by his entertainment. The following day, Rosny arrived at Canterbury, travelling thither in the coach of M. de Beaumont. The people turned out *en masse* to welcome him with such signs of enthusiasm and

respect as quite to enchant Rosny, who speaks in raptures of the civilities which he there received. The superior refinement of the people of Canterbury made great impression on the mind of Rosny. "Canterbury," writes he, "is a small town thickly inhabited; but the people are so civilized and polite that nowhere have I met with more distinguished treatment. Some of the said people advanced and kissed my boot, others embraced my hands; while others presented me with flowers. The purely British portion of the population of Canterbury, nevertheless, retains its natural aversion to the French; but the Walloon and Flemish refugees—men who fleeing from persecution settled in this town—have quite changed the general character of the people, and now compose more than two-thirds of its inhabitants. I visited the great church at Canterbury and attended a service. This church is very fine, and the choir is excellently attuned. The canons caressed me greatly, the more especially as I professed the same creed as themselves."<sup>1</sup> One of these reverend personages confided to Rosny the designs of Aremberg to entice king James from the French alliance; an intrigue which had been previously betrayed to the Dutch envoy.

Rosny, while at Canterbury, was greeted by lord Sidney, who escorted him to Gravesend, where he was received by the earl of Southampton, and a numerous suite of courtiers sent by the king to compliment so illustrious an envoy. At Gravesend

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 14ème.

the royal barges waited for the ambassador and his retinue, which consisted of 240 personages, gentlemen, for the most part, of noble lineage. This pompous progress up the river Thames greatly delighted Rosny, who complacently recounts the honours and salutes of artillery with which he was regaled. The Tower guns alone fired three thousand salutes in honour of the ambassador. Rosny landed at the Tower, and met with a second ovation from a throng of noble personages and citizens on the quay.<sup>1</sup> Incredible cheers rose for the French king, while Rosny stepped into the coach of M. de Beaumont. "On the 18th of June, arrived in London, M. de Rosny, great treasurer of France, accompanied with noblemen and gallant gentlemen in great numbers," relates Stow in his quaint chronicle. The same night they, in 30 coaches, rode to the French ambassador, who lodged at the Barbican, by Red Cross Street; they supped with him and returned to Crosby Place, where the principal (M. de Rosny) was lodged, and the others in places near adjoining." Rosny, however, states that he passed the first night of his sojourn in London at the hôtel of the French ambassador—having previously taken leave of lords Southampton and Sidney,<sup>2</sup> who departed for Windsor to recount to king James the incidents of the progress. The day following, Rosny established him-

<sup>1</sup> Stow's Chronicle.

<sup>2</sup> James, to do honour to the ambassador, created a new officer of his court—a master of the ceremonies, and selected Sir Luke Lewknor for the office.—Rapin, Hist. of England.



self at Crosby Place; an event which was inaugurated by a notable display of the severity with which the ambassador intended to repress all disorderly escapades committed by any of his subordinates. The frays and adventures of various young noblemen attached to the embassies of the Marshals de Montmorency and de Biron, when in London, still afforded subjects of converse and merriment at the French court. Several of Rosny's *attachés*, therefore, eager likewise to signalise themselves, repaired to a celebrated tavern much frequented by the English courtiers. A brawl soon arose, in which an Englishman was challenged by one of the French cavaliers, and slain on the spot. A tumult ensued, and the culprit fled to the hôtel of the ambassador, and entered the apartment in which Rosny was playing at Primero with MM. de Beaumont, d'Oraison, St. Luc, and other cavaliers. A mob of people, meantime, pursued the cavalier, demanding justice on the murderer. The affair, therefore, could not be concealed from Rosny; who, absorbed by the overwhelming import to France of the policy he was sent to advocate, was little disposed to show indulgence to any person whose conduct might endanger his amicable relations with king James and his people. The ambassador asked the name of the culprit—as no person answered, Rosny snatched a flambeau from the table, and examined the features of each young cavalier present. The pallor and agitation of the guilty man betrayed him to the keen eyes of the minister;



the name of the cavalier was Combaut, a near relation of M. de Beaumont, and the only son of wealthy parents. Without hesitation, Rosny declared that he should suffer the penalty of decapitation for his crime ; in proof of which, he ordered his immediate arrest. "What, monsieur !" exclaimed the ambassador, M. de Beaumont, "you mean to cut off the head of one of my relatives—an only son, also heir of 200,000 crowns ? Truly my exertions in the cause of my country will be well recompensed." Rosny, assuming the dignity and prerogative of an ambassador paramount, commanded M. de Beaumont to be silent, and to leave his presence. The same evening Rosny sent a gentleman to impart his decision, and the sentence pronounced on Combaut, to the chief magistrate of the city ; and to request the aid of the city functionaries for the execution of the award. The Lord Mayor, disarmed by the rigour of the ambassador, prayed that the violent deed of M. de Combaut might not be punished by such severity. The following morning Rosny, however, delivered the culprit into the hands of the city authorities, to execute or not the sentence he had pronounced ; and signified his resolve to abandon the culprit to the jurisdiction of the English law. The ambassador de Beaumont and the parents of Combaut, therefore, offered large pecuniary compensation to the friends of the murdered man ; and, after much wrangling, the liberation of Combaut was achieved, after that young cavalier had spent some months of gloomy incarceration in king James's prisons.

After this wholesome example the conduct of the cavaliers of Rosny's retinue was exemplary; and no subsequent broil kindled the angry forebodings of the ambassador.<sup>1</sup>

The condition of parties at the English court, meantime, roused the sagacious energies of Rosny. To win over king James to the foreign policy of his predecessor; and to combine, and direct to the glory of Henri IV. the partialities and antagonism of the four factions, by turns dominant at court, would be no mean achievement of diplomacy. The first of these parties, termed the Scotch faction, comprehended the earl of Mar, the duke of Lennox, nephew to M. d'Entragues, the lords Hume<sup>2</sup> and Kinloss, and other of the king's early companions. These noblemen shared the confidence and pastimes of the king; but, as yet, their policy had consisted only in defending the approaches to the royal favour, against the late minister of Elizabeth, and those politicians—comprising the most patriotic men of the realm—who advocated English interests; and were averse to exclusive alliance with either of the rival potentates of France and Spain. This party had at its head the chancellor lord Suffolk, and Robert Cecil, afterwards viscount Cranbourn, and earl of Salisbury. The Spanish party commanded the allegiance of the Howards, and of all the illustrious Roman Catholics of the realm. These advocated close alliance with Spain; the renunciation of alliance with Holland; distrust of the policy of Henri

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 14ème.

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards earl of Dunbar.

Quatre ; and cordial intercourse with Austria. Inconsistent as it may appear with king James's profession of faith, and his antecedent interests, his majesty in his innermost heart favoured the principles professed by this party. They possessed, in the royal opinion, the *prestige* of legitimate and conservative doctrine ; they were inspired with the veneration owing to royalty ; they hated reform in politics, and revered the sanctity of the papacy. The fourth party consisted chiefly of needy men—of peers, who sought to advance their political fortunes by intrigue ; and of restless ecclesiastics, who hoped to win the purple by zealous and injudicious advocacy of the schemes ever afloat in the papal cabinet to win back the lost *prestige* of Rome over the realms alienated from the Church by heresy. The leaders of this faction were the lords Southampton, Cobham, Carew, Northumberland, and other personages of influence, though of minor rank. The count d'Arenberg, envoy from the archdukes, and Rosny's political rival—as, pending the arrival of a Spanish ambassador, the count also acted as the representative of king Philip—exhibited great reserve ; and appeared unmoved at the homage offered to the ambassador of Henri Quatre. Arenberg had not yet had audience of the king ; under pretext of impaired health, he lodged at St. Mary's Spittle, from whence he removed to Staines, to watch the manœuvres and progress of his rival. Prince Henry of Nassau, and M. de Barneveld, represented the United Provinces ; his majesty, however, had refused to grant audi-

ence to envoys sent "by rebel and seditious provinces." Barneveld, however, frequently conferred with Cecil, and with those other members of the cabinet anxious to support the independence of Holland. Rosny received visits, or messages of ceremony, from all the diplomatic fraternity assembled in London. Cecil and Barneveld paid him early visits: the former, hoping to strengthen his hold on the precarious favour of king James by the *prestige* of his influence over Henry's subtle minister; and by impressing the latter with a persuasion that his goodwill was requisite for the success of his ambassage. Barneveld sought the presence of Rosny to confide and share his apprehensions respecting the Spanish inclinations of king James, of his consort, and ministers; and to exhort Henri Quatre boldly to proclaim himself Protector of the United Provinces, which step might have the salutary effect of arresting the departure of Philip's hostile fleet from the harbour of Lisbon.

King James, meanwhile, arrived at Greenwich from Windsor, and signified his anxious desire to confer with Rosny, "the trusted friend of his beloved ally, king Henry." The great heritage which had fallen to king James, and his intense satisfaction at the survey of the rich jewels and chattels of which he was now the possessor, rendered his majesty more than usually cheery and pedantic. The adulation with which he was beset confirmed the king in the notion of his own enlightenment; and he looked on his new subjects with the eyes of a pedagogue intent on effecting the

reformation of hopeful pupils, although somewhat unruly. The quaint accent and homely truisms in which his majesty indulged, grated unpleasantly on the ears of the stately courtiers; nor could they help commenting on the abrupt nod with which his majesty returned the sweeping salutations of Elizabeth's cavaliers. James fixed Saturday, June 21st, for his reception of Henry's ambassador; a period duly notified to M. de Rosny, with the complimentary intimation, "that king James, until he had granted audience to the ambassador of the very Christian king, had purposely declined the visits of envoys sent by the other potentates of Europe." A source of embarrassment, however, assailed the politic Rosny, by the order he had received from his royal master to present himself at the English court arrayed in mourning for the defunct queen. The English courtiers, out of servile homage to Elizabeth's successor, had never worn mourning for their late royal mistress. The sable garments of Rosny and his gentlemen, therefore, being a tacit rebuke for the indecorum of such neglect, it was officially intimated to the ambassador de Beaumont, "that all the courtiers regarded the intention of the marquis de Rosny to appear with his suite arrayed in mourning robes at his approaching audience of his majesty as an insult; that the king would feel secret displeasure, seeing that his majesty had been pleased himself to dispense with such habiliments; and consequently that the political errand of M. de Rosny would be

gravely hazarded." After this intimation Rosny, with genuine reluctance, ordered his gentlemen to lay aside their mourning—a mandate which occasioned much confusion and murmuring, as it was issued only on the day previous to the audience.

On the morning of the 21st, Lord Derby arrived at Crosby palace, to escort Rosny and the members of his ambassage to Greenwich, to which palace they were conveyed on board his majesty's state barges. A collation was offered on the arrival of the ambassadors; the procession was then marshalled to the throne room, in which James waited to greet his illustrious visitors. The chambers of the palace were filled with spectators, amongst whom were Nassau, Barneveld, and the deputies, colleagues of the latter personages, who had never yet even seen the king. Rosny's retinue of 120 gentlemen marched two and two before their chief: James stood upon an elevated platform, and nodded familiarly to the gentlemen of the suite, as they passed the throne making profound obeisance. When his majesty perceived M. de Rosny his eagerness to greet him was such, that, contrary to etiquette, he descended the steps of the dais with outstretched hand. Such condescension scandalised the personages surrounding his majesty, and one of the ministers plucked the royal sleeve, and whispered in the king's ear. James drew back, but said sharply, in a loud voice, "What! my lord, because I choose to show unprecedented honours to an ambassador whom I revere for his fidelity towards his master, and for his attachment

to my faith, is this a reason why other envoys should expect similar distinction?" Rosny replied to this compliment; and then opened his mission by presenting letters from king Henry, and by delivering the verbal messages with which he had been intrusted. James took Henry's letter, and read it himself with much deliberation—an office usually performed at public ceremonies by the secretary of State. More compliments then passed; after which James signifying his desire to converse at his ease with a minister whom he so esteemed, Rosny ascended the steps of the throne and stood beside his majesty under the canopy; while Cecil and the other high personages discoursed with the gentlemen of the suite. James, at the opening of the discourse, acknowledged that he felt pique at certain derisive allusions to his person and prowess attributed to king Henry,—who, he was told, had called him in the presence of the French court, *capitaine-ès-arts, et clerc aux armes*. Rosny assured the king of the fervour of his master's attachment to his old friend and ally of Scotland; and of Henry's intense desire to conclude strict and perfect alliance between the crowns. James then discoursed on the power of the Spanish monarchy, and said that Philip III. was a prince of intellect too feeble and inconstant to persevere in the aggressive designs of his father. "I know how to make distinction between the ambassador of my good brother of France. The king of Spain and the archduchess infanta have sent me an ambassador (Arenberg) who can neither walk nor



talk, and who has asked me to grant him audience in a garden! Nevertheless, I hear that the king of Spain is sending me his postmaster-general as his resident ambassador in London, intending I suppose that affairs shall be despatched with postal celerity!"<sup>1</sup> After more allusions to the insincerity and ambition of the Spanish cabinet, James suddenly asked Rosny whether he had attended *le prêche* since his residence in London? On being answered in the affirmative, James added:—"Ah, then you do not intend to leave us after the example of M. de Sancy, as I have heard. The latter personage hoped thereby greatly to profit, whereas his influence has notably decreased. Pray, do you give the title of holiness to the pope?" "Yes, sire," replied Rosny; "I accommodate myself to existing usages in such matters." James therefore launched out on his favourite theme; and treated Rosny to a theological lecture, demonstrating the evil of such latitude in religious matters. The audience then terminated—James having studiously avoided the subjects which most anxiously occupied the mind of the ambassador—the policy of the English cabinet respecting the United Provinces; and the opinion of king James on the affair of the duke de Bouillon. Three days intervened before Rosny was again admitted to audience—but this interval the clever diplomatist improved with his usual astuteness. The gracious amenity of the king's manner while conversing with Rosny;

<sup>1</sup> James alluded to Taxis, conde de Villamediana, in whose family this office was hereditary.



and the complacency with which James accepted the compliments and overtures of Henri Quatre, caused much misgiving to the members of the Spanish faction of the court, who now affected to rely on the support of Queen Anne, and her undoubted influence over the mind of her royal consort. Rosny however placed little faith in these resources, and applied himself to propitiate the good opinion of Cecil; and to improve the influence which he perceived that the prestige and fortune of king Henry exercised over the mind of certain noblemen of the court, especially of Lord Mountjoy. Intimate intercourse was soon established between Crosby palace and the abode of Mountjoy. Cobham and Raleigh also managed to confer with Rosny; and unblushingly confessed the subtle nature of the intrigues whereby the king of Spain hoped to establish his empire over the realm of England. The most important revelation, however, was extracted from the Earl of Northumberland, whom Rosny expressly states that he bribed by the offer of a large pension. This nobleman sent his secretary to unfold the true nature of the proposals tendered by Lerma: the Spanish minister, it appeared, proposed a league offensive and defensive between England and Spain, to enable king James to recover the ancient dominions of the Plantagenets in France; while Philip III. took possession of Bretagne and Burgundy. His Catholic Majesty, in consideration of this alliance, offered to advance an instalment of the sums requisite for so gigantic a war; and, moreover, to

grant peace to the United Provinces, on any terms agreeable to king James. From other quarters Rosny received intimation that Philip, in the event of the failure of this conspiracy against the dominions of Henry IV., intended to agitate the claims of Arabella Stuart; believing that the marriage of this princess with the duke of Savoy, or with the prince of Parma, would equally give him the continental ascendancy which he coveted. From the Venetian envoy, Rosny obtained information that an envoy from the duke de Bouillon, named Williams, resided in London; with whom the duke de la Trimouille and M. Duplessis Mornay were in constant correspondence, to stir up king James to show marked interest in the welfare of the French Calvinists; moreover, that M. d'Entragues and Madame de Verneuil, through an individual named Du Panny, in the service of the duke of Lenox, were in communication with the Spanish faction of the English cabinet. The object of this intrigue was to declare the marriage of Henry IV. and Marie de Medici invalid, and the dauphin illegitimate—a piece of malevolence in accord with the hate ever demonstrated by the Spanish Hapsburgs for king Henry. This last intelligence, though disquieting, did not greatly move Henry's ambassador; on the contrary, the peril which menaced the alliance between the crowns stimulated his resolve to put forth every resource of diplomacy to overthrow such hostile combinations. Letters the most affectionate and confiding reached him from his royal master; money, decorations, and

promises he was empowered to lavish; while the indolence of Aremberg, and the delay in the arrival of the two expected Spanish ambassadors, Taxis and Velasco, gave him an advantage which few knew better how to profit by than Rosny.

On Wednesday the 25th, Rosny obtained a second private audience of king James. The conference lasted several hours. Rosny explained the foreign policy of James's predecessor, Elizabeth, with regard to Spain and the revolted provinces. James appeared to relish the discourse, and spoke positively of his resolve to maintain the independence of Holland; but when pressed by Rosny to declare his acceptance of the alliance offensive and defensive, between the crowns of England and France, the king's irresolution was manifest; and he declined to enter into the subject, promising, however, to send the chief members of the privy-council to confer with Rosny before their next interview. It seemed evident by his majesty's discourse that he was well inclined for alliance with France; but was not prepared to declare war against Spain, or to refuse the offered amity of king Philip. James next interceded for Bouillon, whose exile he declared that he commiserated, and asked if Rosny deemed himself at liberty to confer confidentially on the subject? The royal curiosity was assuaged by Rosny; who obtained the reward of his candour by receiving a solemn promise from king James to refrain from agitation amongst the Huguenots of France on the duke's behalf; as, said the king shrewdly:—"I do not intend to meddle with the

affairs of France—neither shall I expect my good brother to interfere with my lady Arabella, and the Catholics of this realm.” On the whole Rosny left Greenwich in complacent mood. Philip’s tampering with the party hostile to his accession, and the arrogance of Spanish pretensions and patronage, galled the king; who, moreover, resented the overtures which had been privately made to the queen his consort. The reputation for wisdom and energy which queen Anne, on her accession to the crown of England, seems to have possessed in all European courts, was by no means vindicated by subsequent events. Even Henry IV. expresses a desire that Rosny should wait her majesty’s arrival, as, writes the king:—“I have been informed that nothing can exceed the irresolution and vacillation of king James; and it is probable, therefore, that the queen will have, at least, equal sway over the realm.” The ministers, according to the promise given by James, met four times at Rosny’s lodgings. The latter then emphatically disclaimed, for his royal master, an aggressive policy: the design of France, he said, was the freedom of the Dutch republic; and the repression of the grasping domination of Spain. Rosny’s third audience was on Sunday, June 29th. All the gentlemen of the suite received an invitation to dine at the palace; and the ambassador took his repast at the royal table, the other guest being M. de Beaumont. Two circumstances during the banquet excited the comment of de Rosny. The first was, the “astonishing fact” that the nobleman in attendance knelt when pre-

senting the dishes to the king ; secondly, that James boasted indecorously when at table, in the presence of the assembled court, “ that before the demise of Elizabeth he gave the law to her ministers, and was better obeyed than the queen herself ! ” The following day Rosny again conferred with the privy-council, in the presence of the Flemish deputies. The conference was stormy—Cecil and Rosny were ministers well matched in political guile and resource ; and the former, while approving as a whole the policy of the French Government, desired to shirk pecuniary obligations, so that the burden of any impending war might fall on France. Rosny even charged Cecil with flagrant duplicity ; and states that the latter demanded that Henry should, without delay, reimburse the sums lent to him by the deceased queen for a stipulated and yet unexpired term. On Rosny demonstrating the injustice and inconvenience of such demand, the subtle secretary, addressing the deputies of the States, bade them mark that the money thus refused was intended for their supply ; therefore, that it was the ill-will of king Henry, and not the indifference of his Britannic majesty, which they had to combat. Rosny thereupon demanded final audience of his majesty, either to take leave, or to discuss the articles of an amicable treaty. He had meantime taken a resolve, which was to confide to James, under a solemn oath of secrecy, the vast designs concerted between Elizabeth and Henri Quatre, and discussed by Rosny and her majesty at Dover. The irresolution and misgivings of the

king were so visible, that the astute Rosny perceived that he would never withstand the counter advice of his ministers unless strengthened by a conviction that he was wiser than they; and acted in accordance with an enlarged scheme of secret policy, of which they had no cognizance. James received the communication in amazement, and declared that the project had long ago recommended itself privately to his mind; but he confessed that he had come to the conclusion that the scheme was visionary, and its realisation impossible. The fact that his great and politic predecessor had discussed and adopted a policy comprehensive enough to change the face of Europe, without misgiving or dread, roused the emulation of James. Already inclined to the French alliance from friendship for king Henry, and disgust at the patronage of the cabinet of Madrid, Rosny's manœuvre fixed the vacillating resolve of the king. James therefore promised to affix his signature to the draft of the treaty in conjunction with that of Rosny as plenipotentiary for Henry IV.; or should the latter desire to submit the proposed convention to his royal master, James undertook on receiving back the document after an interval of six weeks, authenticated by the sign-manual of king Henry, to ratify such without further difficulty. The skill shown by Rosny throughout the conference was incomparable: he assailed James by his desire for posthumous renown, and by his longing to "have his name recorded by that of Henri le Grand in a future page of history as the joint liberator of

Europe." He appealed to the learning of the king, and to his religion, "so free from prejudice and cant:" he skilfully hinted that queen Anne and "several of the chief members of the cabinet intended to affiance the prince of Wales to the new-born infanta of Spain; but that it behoved two such liberal and enlightened monarchs as Henri Quatre and king James to suffer neither chicane nor dictation in a matter of such importance." The laudations of Rosny transported the king, and, after a conference which lasted more than four hours, he summoned the lord-admiral Howard, the earls of Northumberland, Southampton, and Mar, lords Mountjoy and Cecil, and others, and declared that after mature reflection he had decided to sign alliance with Henry IV. against the overweening pretensions of Spain. "I command you," said his majesty, "to expedite the necessary powers without your usual reply or disputes; and in conformity with such resolve, I will give positive assurances of my gracious protection to the ambassadors of MM. the States-General of Holland." A draft of the treaty, offensive and defensive, consequently was drawn with despatch, and signed by king James and Rosny. When this formality was expedited, the latter departed for France, to lay at Henry's feet this convention—the reward of unexampled perseverance and skill, and extorted almost in opposition to the opinion of every member of the English privy-council.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (*Economies Royales*—edit. orig. Rapin. De Thou—Stow's Chronicle. Dupleix, Siri, Mem. Recond., t. 1. Journal de Henri IV.



At home, during Rosny's absence, the king had had some troubles, and little solace. The *tracasseries* between the queen and Madame de Verneuil had been ceaseless; while Henry felt great solicitude respecting the health of his sister, for many alarming symptoms had manifested themselves in Madame's case, which she obstinately persisted in attributing to pregnancy. M. de Soissons also, who was now intimately leagued with Madame de Verneuil, pretended great friendship for Villeroy; and scornfully alluded to what he was pleased to term "the conceited parsimony of M. de Rosny." Rosny moreover received intelligence that father Cotton, one of the most eloquent preachers amongst the Jesuits, was making advance in court favour; and that queen Marie was seldom absent from his public ministrations. This Jesuit had received permission to repair to Paris as one of a deputation to wait the royal decision respecting the recall of the order; a mission for which his tact and courtly manner rendered him peculiarly qualified. Rumours of encroachments upon his cherished department of finance, by M. de Soissons and Madame de Verneuil, likewise disconcerted Rosny. As direct grants of public money were no longer to be obtained without the counter-signature of the minister, M. de Soissons had hit upon the notable expedient of asking the king to grant him the use of certain small dues levied in the frontier towns on woollen cloths, and other articles of commerce. The amount, which in some cases was only a half *liard* on every bale, appeared so insignificant to the



king, that to avoid the pain of refusal he granted the request; at the same time his majesty prudently intimated that the signature of Rosny must still be obtained to render valid the grant of the monopoly. In great haste, therefore, to put an end to these enterprises, Rosny hurried his preparations to leave England.

His audience of farewell was granted in the palace of Whitehall, where James repaired purposely for the occasion on being informed of the indisposition of the ambassador; whose old wound on the lip had opened again, in consequence of fatigue, and the anxieties of his mission. James spoke in terms of enthusiastic praise respecting king Henry, "whom he wished to take for his model in the kingly office, and for his dearest friend." He reiterated his promise relative to the treaty, and to the duke de Bouillon; he exhorted Rosny to prevent the recall of the Jesuit communities into France; and intrusted him with letters for the king and queen. James also made tender inquiries respecting the health of the king, and on the nature of his ailments; and advised that Henry should pursue his favourite amusement of the chase with moderation. Rosny then offered the rich presents sent by Henry—which consisted of six horses, splendidly caparisoned. Henry also ceded the services of one M. St. Antoine, the most celebrated horseman of the day, who was to become the instructor of the prince of Wales in riding. For the young prince, the king sent a lance set with diamonds, and a helmet inlaid with gold. Queen Anne was propi-

tiated by a large Venetian mirror set in a gold frame, studded with diamonds. Rosny sent his brother-in-law, M. de Vancelas, to meet the queen, and present to her this sumptuous gift. The duke of Lenox, Lady Hunsdon, the earl of Northumberland, Cecil, and others, received gifts of diamond stars, chains, snuff-boxes, and buttons. Altogether, the value of the presents distributed, exclusive of the horses sent to his majesty, exceeded the sum of 60,000 crowns. Lord Sidney was commanded to attend M. de Rosny to Dover; and to furnish the ambassador and his suite with every convenience and luxury until his embarkation.

King Henry, meantime, anxious to confer with Rosny, took up his abode at Villers Coterets, and despatched courier after courier to hasten the interview. From Abbeville relays of horses were sent from the royal stables, which enabled Rosny to travel with celerity. At three o'clock, on the afternoon of July 12, he passed through Abbeville, having dismissed his suite of gentlemen at Boulogne, who departed well satisfied to escape from *surveillance*. At eight the following morning, Rosny arrived at Villers Coterets. Henry, who always rose at dawn, was walking in the park attended by Villeroy, Bellièvre, MM. de Soissons, Roquelaure, Frontenac, de Maisse, and de Sillery. His reception of Rosny was such as to affect that very self-possessed personage, who only showed tenderness when subjected to the impulsive approbation of his royal master. When Henry's commendations subsided, Rosny presented king James's

letter, and the draught of the treaty offensive and defensive between the crowns. He imparted the admiring respect felt by his Britannic majesty for his august brother of France; and recounted James's promise to refrain from intrigue with M. de Bouillon; and to discountenance any disloyal enterprise which might hereafter be agitated by the French Calvinists. All the written documents were read aloud on the spot by Villeroy. The resident ambassador de Beaumont, meantime, had communicated with his government during Rosny's homeward journey, to announce the arrival at Windsor of queen Anne; and also to report the landing of Taxis conde de Villamediana the Spanish ambassador, and the harbinger of Velasco constable of Castile, who was about to visit the court of London on a secret and extraordinary mission. Beaumont, who loved to depreciate the diplomacy of Rosny, expressed many doubts whether the arrival of the queen and of Don Juan de Taxis might not neutralise the promises obtained by Rosny; especially as the treaty with France was yet neither ratified nor exchanged. "Is not the coincidence at least remarkable, that the queen and the ambassador of Spain should be approaching Windsor nearly at the same hour?" Beaumont relates that Arenberg, who during Rosny's negotiations had played so pitiful a rôle, had gone forth in great elation to meet Taxis; and that the influence of his consort, aided by the subtle tongues of Don Juan, M. d'Arenberg, and of Monseigneur Cecil, was likely to overthrow the political resolu-

tion of king James. The private despatches in cipher, however, so diligently transmitted by Rosny to his royal master, in which every incident and political veering of the high personages of the British court was recorded, reassured king Henry. Grasping Rosny by the hand, he said, addressing M. de Soissons, when the former had finished his narration, "Well, *mon cousin*, what do you think of this achievement? Speak openly, and tell me your opinion!" "As you command me thus, sire, I will own that I think the marquis de Rosny has great influence with the king of England; and that if his relation be strictly accurate, he has known wonderfully well how to adapt himself to the English people. I deem, therefore, that the said marquis was in duty bound to bring back to your majesty terms more precise concerning the alliance he was sent to negotiate. He tells us of many fine words, but of few satisfactory deeds!" Henry laughed, and shrugged his shoulders. "Your observation, Monseigneur, is sapient and acute; it is easy, nevertheless, to find fault with the actions of others!"<sup>1</sup> The king then dismissed Rosny to take repose; and prohibited him from leaving his apartment until the following morning, when he invited him to conference *tête-à-tête*.

The arrival of queen Anne at Windsor brought none of the political changes apprehended. The alleged Spanish inclinations of that princess vanished as she approached the capital of her new dominions. The wilful and impulsive temper of the queen was

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 10<sup>ème</sup>.

not adapted for political cabal ; and the formation of her court, brilliant fêtes, and an occasional warm skirmish with her erudite spouse, whom she revered, but yet pitilessly ridiculed, formed occupation more congenial. The gallant epistles and splendid gifts of Henri Quatre propitiated the queen ; while Anne, whose love of dress was great, was further gratified by the attention of Marie de Medici, who supplied her majesty with the most approved habits and patterns in vogue at the French court. The delays of the Spanish cabinet meanwhile began highly to incense king James. The king was further alarmed by the suspicious *menées* of Taxis, who no sooner arrived in London than he applied his powers of factious intrigue to stir up the fanaticism of parties, and to disorganise the court. He was even detected in the attempt to corrupt James's Scotch regiments, to induce the men to enlist under the banner of Spain. James found his sententious truisms completely lost on the haughty Spaniard, who scorned the mediæval lore in which his majesty was an adept ; and whose conduct indicated how deeply he was imbued with the conviction that kings reigned only by the grace of God, and of his Catholic majesty ! The conspiracy, meantime, of Lords Cobham, Carew, Sir Walter Raleigh, Markham, and others, to place Arabella Stuart on the throne of England, broke forth ; in which machinations Taxis was supposed to have taken an active part. Alarmed at this bold enterprise, and at the audacity of the conspirators, who plotted and negotiated without the pre-

vious knowledge or consent of Lady Arabella, and who still caballed with the Roman Catholics of the realm, James viewed the treaty he had concluded with Rosny as his best safeguard against Spanish aggression. Even the subtle secretary Cecil now allowed that such alliance might be politic: the treaty, therefore, when authenticated by Henri Quatre, was sent to London, and was presented by M. de Beaumont to king James, together with a letter from Rosny. James signed the treaty,<sup>1</sup> adding many flattering encomiums on M. de Rosny and his royal master, to whom he addressed a congratulatory letter. Henry and his ally corresponded frequently thenceforth; magnificent presents were interchanged; and France was explored to find the dun-coloured horses so peculiarly admired by king James. The English ambassador, Sir Thomas Parry, however, was not popular at the French court. Parry was a man of sound practical sense, without a particle of sentiment or romance. He warmly supported commercial interests; and throughout the year 1504 persecuted king Henry and his cabinet to obtain redress for some Scottish merchants, who complained of wrongs incurred on the Flemish frontier in the taxing of their wares.

On taking leave of his master at Villers Coterets, Rosny proceeded to Paris, and again installed in his favourite cabinet at the Arsenal, began to in-

<sup>1</sup> For the treaty between Henry and James, see Rymer, vol. 16, p. 645—53. Leonard, *Recueil de Traités*, etc., t. 2. *OEconomies Royales*, edit. orig.

investigate the grants of commercial monopolies so heedlessly bestowed by his majesty. "The king during my absence had had the weakness to suffer more than twenty of these edicts to be extorted from him. The count de Soissons and Madame de Verneuil benefitted largely by these grants. The monopoly obtained by Soissons permitted the latter to levy a tax of fifteen sous on every bale of merchandise exported from the realm." The count represented that the privilege was annually worth the insignificant sum of 30,000 livres; the accurate knowledge of Rosny proved, however, that the grant amounted annually to the sum of 300,000 crowns. Rosny showed the result of his calculations to the king, who, aghast at the sum, left it to his minister to extricate him from his hasty promise. Early in his ministerial career, Rosny, aware of the easy prodigality of his royal master, had intimated to the first presidents of the parliaments of the realm, with the assent of the king, that no edict granting pecuniary privilege to individuals should be registered—a form necessary for its validity—unless such decree was accompanied by a private letter from himself. Henry highly approved of this reservation, which transferred the blame of graces refused to the High Courts; while his majesty derived the popularity of bounteous profusion. As soon therefore as Rosny arrived in Paris, M. de Soissons waited on the minister, and, after a preamble of many flattering words, he said, "that he had a great longing to see the words Maximilien de Béthune inscribed in full at the foot



of a certain document." Rosny replied in the same tone of *badinage*; but added, "that he was now too wary to set his name to any writing, without previous diligent perusal." Soissons seeing that his graciousness was expended in vain, then assumed an air of royal superiority; and placing his edict, signed by the king, before Rosny, requested that the usual form for procuring its registration might be proceeded with. Rosny replied, after glancing through the edict, that he could not presume to give validity to an act of such pecuniary importance when the finances of the realm were embarrassed; if M. le Comte, therefore, would procure the necessary letter to the first president of the Cours des Aides of Rouen from his majesty, he would cause all necessary measures to be adopted. "I perceive, monsieur, that your circumspection is malice; and that you intend to foil me," said Soissons, bitterly. "In olden times, monseigneur, the necessities of the kingdom were considered; and the sons of France had each only a revenue of 100,000 livres: you receive considerably more!" Soissons haughtily rejoined that "money was never grudged to so near a relative of the king;" adding insinuations that Rosny's penurious ideas proceeded from his plebeian origin. "The king's relatives, monsieur, are those persons whom his majesty chooses so to acknowledge!" "Pray what obligation is binding on the king to furnish money for the profusion of his relatives? I should like to be cognizant of such obligations, M. le Comte!" The count, perceiving that Rosny was resolved to annul an edict sanction-



ing so unjust a monopoly, quitted the Arsenal in a rage, and went to visit Madame la Marquise, to whom he related his interview; and stated his opinion that it was the intention of Rosny to cancel all the grants. Soissons then urged Madame de Verneuil to see Rosny immediately; adding, "that the latter would not dare to disoblige a personage of her importance; when, if one grant in her favour was registered, the whole edict must pass muster." Madame de Verneuil accordingly repaired to the abode of Rosny, convinced that her interposition would be successful, and that the minister would decline a contest. Rosny, in no amiable mood, was preparing to go to the Louvre, when a secretary announced that Madame la Marquise desired an interview. A roll of paper was in the hand of the minister when Henriette entered his cabinet of audience. Madame la Verneuil opened her battery by asking the contents of the paper. "Madame," replied Rosny, "it relates to an affair in which you bear no small part;" so saying he unrolled the document, and read therefrom the names of the personages who had imposed on the credulity of their royal master; with the sums alleged by them to be the amount of the gratuity conceded, accompanied, however, by a true statement of the moneys granted, from the pen of Rosny. Madame de Verneuil listened to the recital unmoved:—"And what, monseigneur, are you about to do with that document thus amended?" "I am now on my way to the Louvre to make suitable representations to his majesty!" "Certes, monsieur,

the king will have little to do if he listens to you, and alienates so many worthy personages to satisfy your caprices! Upon whom would you desire that the king should bestow his favours, if not on his relatives, and his mistress?" "Your remark, madame, would be fine and feasible if the king took this money from his privy purse; but to burden poor tradesmen, artisans, labourers, and farmers, whose labours support us, is without excuse; they, poor creatures, have enough to do to pay tribute to one master, without the burden of relatives and mistresses!" So saying, Rosny took leave of the marquise, excusing his departure on the necessity of keeping his appointment with the king.<sup>1</sup> Henriette went forth exasperated beyond measure at what she termed "her rude and bearish reception;" and with many threats of making Rosny repent his discourtesy, she repeated the conversation to M. de Soissons, embellishing the narrative by reporting that Rosny insinuated that his majesty had too many relatives; and that it would be happy for himself and his people to be rid of such personages!<sup>2</sup> M. de Soissons, on this report, asked audience of the king, and insisted upon challenging Rosny to mortal combat, unless redress was granted by the royal justice. Henry demanded who M. de

<sup>1</sup> Sully, *Œconomies Royales*, edit. orig.—*Mem.*, liv. 16ème.

<sup>2</sup> "Dans la rage qui la transporta, Madame de Verneuil courut redire au Comte de Soissons que j'avais dit que le roi n'avait que trop de parents; et qu'il serait heureux, lui et son peuple, si l'on en était défait! Le Comte ne se posseda plus!"

Soissons' informant was? The count refused to divulge the name of this personage; but stated, that the insolence of Rosny during his own interview was a dishonour to the blood royal, and merited the exile of so daring a minister. "What! mon cousin, you refuse to divulge the name I demand, under pretext that you have taken oath to keep it secret?—well, I now also swear to believe only what M. de Rosny tells me. His veracity is as good as that of your unknown tale-bearer." This foolish squabble agitated the court and capital for weeks. Few persons dared to espouse the quarrel of Soissons excepting Madame Henriette, who retired to Verneuil. The violence of Soissons was such, that the king, apprehensive that some attack would be made on the life of his minister, commanded Rosny not to leave his hôtel. Henry at length authoritatively ordered Soissons to be reconciled to M. de Rosny; while he commanded the latter to express his sorrow if his words had hurt or mortified M. le Comte; and to state that he had no intention to offend the royal dignity of the latter. The king at the same time announced that he took Rosny under his royal protection; and that any indignity inflicted on the latter would be esteemed as done to himself. This intimation was made to M. de Soissons by the chancellor, who summoned the count, in the name of the king, to leave Paris. The count de St. Paul and the duke de Montbazou were named by the king to witness and report the reconciliation of the belligerents. "As for what you say relative to the innocent inten-

tions of M. de Rosny," replied Soissons, "it is not in the power of any man to be convinced against his judgment and knowledge. These calumnies may be very amusing incidents to some personages; but to me they strike at my honour and repute." Much wrangling and dissension ensued: M. de Soissons for long showed himself intractable; and spent days and nights in writing statements of the insults and wrongs which he had experienced from Rosny; and especially that through the treachery of the latter his marriage with Madame had been put aside. The commands of the king, however, could not finally be defied; and M. de Soissons was compelled to accept the letter written by Rosny at the dictation of his royal master; and to shake hands with the latter in Henry's cabinet. The concession made by Rosny to the royal rank of his assailant, was, in the opinion of M. de Soissons, completely neutralised by the immediate abrogation of the edicts, the source of the dispute; and by a visit which the king and queen paid to the château de Rosny.

Marie, wearied with perpetual combats, had spent an interval at Compiègne and at the baths of Pougues, attended by the Concini, her satellites, and by a limited suite. On her return she accompanied the king on a tour he was about to make throughout Normandy. The only amusing incident of the progress was, that a complaint was made to Henry at a village in the vicinity of Mantes, concerning the violence of three persons, who had visited the farms in the neighbourhood, and carried off all the young pea-fowls without payment, under the pre-

tence that they were needed for the table of her majesty. The sufferers thereupon presented a remonstrance to the king, and requested payment. "The queen has no lack of purveyors," replied his majesty ; "let these rogues and vagabonds be soundly flogged !" A sumptuous fête offered by M. and Madame de Rosny to their majesties the day following their arrival at Rosny proved a failure, from the ravages of an inundation. The river, swoln by a heavy storm of rain, overflowed its banks ; and the waters rushed into the culinary offices of the château, and spoiled the fruit and confectionary prepared for the banquet. The meeting between their majesties had not been joyous ; Marie treated her royal husband with reserve ; and wept whenever the name of the little dauphin was mentioned. The promise of marriage which Madame de Verneuil possessed alarmed the maternal fears of Marie. "At the king's demise the legitimacy of his son will be disputed by all malcontents—to Rome they will appeal ; and to his holiness will remain the power of pronouncing the lot of my son and my own fate, and the destiny for weal or for woe of this realm." The menaces of M. d'Entragues and d'Auvergne, together with the fact of their *liaison* with the Spanish ambassador, and that they maintained a political agent in London, appears to have distracted the queen ; and to have aroused such feelings of vengeance as found vent in menaces which made even the audacious Henriette tremble. Though utterly enslaved by his mistress, the king distrusted her loyalty : in Hen-

ry's intercourse with Madame de Verneuil, the talisman which seemed to enslave him was her insolent indifference. Her brightness and beauty, and her pride of birth, fascinated the king, who in the midst of his recapitulations of domestic griefs used to break out in transports respecting the "surpassing charm" of her society. Henry likewise was always in a ferment of anxiety lest Henriette should secretly leave him and escape to England. Many of the *tracasseries* which happened at this period had no other origin than the perpetual attempts of the king to subdue the wayward will of his mistress and to bring her to his feet. There was no crime, however flagrant, Henry often insinuated in his consultations with Rosny, which he was not prepared to pardon, and even to rejoice over, provided that it placed Madame la Marquise for ever after dependent on his loving mercy! Nevertheless, the indifference so often shown by Henriette was no artifice; every document extant connected with this episode of the life of Henry IV. testifies that her reluctance was real; her desire to leave France genuine; and the anger of her powerful relatives unaffected. So long as the king remained unmarried the relatives of Madame de Verneuil connived at her position—they held the royal promise of marriage, dependent upon one condition—which condition, had been fulfilled by the birth of Henriette's first-born son—a bond not invalidated, as they averred, by the premature demise of the child. The ministers of Spain, ever on the alert to work mischief, descried unbounded

scope for chicane in the circumstances; for did they not hold in their hands the clue to an intrigue which might hereafter renew the calamities of civil war; and again lay the realm open to the machinations of the Spanish Hapsburgs, by raising the important question of the legitimacy of the future king? Having so promising a basis for operation, Taxis began to tamper with the ambition and loyalty of the count d'Entragues and his stepson, M. d'Auvergne. These noblemen had neither virtue nor patriotism enough to refrain from sunning themselves in the brilliant visions evoked by Taxis. Madame de Verneuil was, it is stated, ignorant of the ulterior designs discussed; but consented that the project of her departure with her two children from the kingdom should be planned. In venturing thus far, d'Auvergne quieted his conscience by the authority given him during the king's recent illness at Fontainebleau to discuss with Taxis the means of providing a refuge for Madame de Verneuil and her children, in case of the royal demise. Henriette, therefore, when informed that the queen had repeatedly threatened her life, unless she withdrew from court, thought that she was betraying no disloyalty in applying to the same personages, whose aid on a similar emergency had been requested by the king. This apology was, of course, sophistical, as Henriette well knew; but it supplied an excuse for *menées* otherwise inexcusable. The agent through whom MM. d'Entragues carried on their communications with Taxis was one Thomas



Morgan a refugee, who had fled from the police of queen Elizabeth for divers misdemeanours. During his exile, Morgan, who was zealous for his faith, had constituted himself the agent of queen Mary Stuart in Paris, and faithfully served the interests of that unfortunate princess. This office brought Morgan into constant communication with the Spanish ambassador; the more so, as Philip III. testified a disposition to pay Morgan the sum of 6,000 francs, which was owing to the latter by the deceased queen Mary. In obedience to instructions issued by Taxis, this Morgan began to pay humble duty to MM. d'Entragues; and by malicious comments on the dishonour done to Madame de Verneuil, and on her peril from the fury of the queen, persuaded d'Entragues to meet the Spanish ambassador secretly, for the first time on the night of the 4th of November, 1602—a visit which occurred immediately after the tragedy of the execution of M. de Biron! The count states, that he repaired to that first interview more out of curiosity, to hear what Taxis had to communicate, than from disloyal motives. “M. de Taxis,” relates M. d'Entragues, “first conversed on matters connected with the Holy League, which he said that he gloried to have promoted. He then spoke of the attachment of the king to my daughter; and asked whether it was true that we possessed a promise of marriage, and whether we would give him a copy of such document as a curiosity? I replied that I never could consent, neither would my daughter permit me to confide a transcript of that important



paper to a foreigner. I added, that the king showed no anxiety to repossess himself of the paper." The count took oath that nothing further passed at that first interview: nevertheless, the insinuations of Taxis lighted the ambition smouldering in the minds both of Henriette and her kindred. Many chances seemed to woo them forward to attempt the possession of that coveted bauble, the throne—the influence and wealth of Spain; the empire which Henriette exercised over the royal affection; the notorious dissensions between their majesties; and last, though not least, Marie de Medici sprang from the ducal race of Medici—princes whose policy inclined them to submission towards Spain, and who dared not, as was supposed, resist any design which might be formed for the repudiation of the queen. The first step was taken after this interview in the subsequent conspiracy, by the despatch of an envoy to the duke of Lenox and his brothers, commissioned to support the family influence, and to communicate with the Spanish embassy in London.<sup>1</sup> The next and second audience accorded to Entragues by Taxis was during the embassy of Rosny in London: an interview of greater significance, inasmuch as Taxis had been nominated to represent his court in London—where the retainer sent by MM. d'Entragues had already established himself—London being thereby intended as the nucleus of the intrigue. To this interview the Count d'Auvergne

<sup>1</sup> De Thou—Hist. de son Temps. Procès de M. d'Entragues, etc., liv. 132. Dupleix.

accompanied his stepfather. The discourse was at first confined to the siege of Ostend, and the treaty which king Henry had despatched Rosny to negotiate with the king of England. "My royal master would long ago have subdued these rebel Dutchmen, if your king had not supported the insurrection by arms and money." Auvergne replied, "that the states of Holland had helped king Henry in his necessity; therefore, it was equitable that his majesty should repay the loan advanced to himself in years past, and give military aid to good allies." Taxis made some indifferent comment; adding, that the health of the king was precarious, and that his life and habits were leading his majesty apace to the tomb: that Henry would leave behind him a young king on the throne of Spain, who would avenge on the infant, son of the former, the injuries and losses sustained by the Spanish nation. Taxis likewise observed, that the king was not sincere in his profession of faith: that he had granted *la prêche* to the Huguenots, and, besides, countless privileges by the accursed edict given at Nantes, and forced on the parliaments of the realm. The conversation continued in this strain—the topics discussed being little suitable to a loyal ear. Taxis then announced his own speedy departure for London, to negotiate a treaty with the king of England—for the ratification of which a state embassy was already nominated to leave Madrid—and requested to know whether MM. d'Auvergne and d'Entragues would object to an introduction to the new ambassador, Don

Bathazer de Zuniga? These personages replied by assenting to the proposal: at midnight, therefore, Morgan again conducted them, disguised with masks and cloaks, to the abode of M. de Taxis. The introduction accomplished, Zuniga drew M. d'Auvergne aside, and opened a discussion on Spanish politics; while Taxis levelled his batteries on Entragues by offering him, on behalf of Philip III., a pension of 10,000 crowns, if he would give a copy of the marriage document, provided that its stipulations agreed with the general statements made of its purport. M. d'Entragues coldly refused—according to his own statement of the interview. Taxis next asked whether the promise was conditional; or whether its ratification was made to depend on the privy-council? “The promise is direct—the sole condition being the birth of a male child,” replied Entragues. “Madame la Marquise, I conclude, comprehends her peril: perhaps, monsieur, it may not be true that the queen is exasperated, and that her majesty has repeatedly threatened to commit your daughter and her son to the Bastille for life, should she survive the king?” The count replied, that “they had been so informed; nevertheless, his daughter would have the powerful protection of her brother, M. d'Auvergne, in case of his own demise—and the queen, after all, might not have the power which she supposed: at any rate, it was doubtful whether all minds would be so agreed as to her assumption of authority, to render it politic to make an arrest of such moment.”

Taxis, a few days subsequent to this interview, set sail for England, leaving his subtle and evil suggestions to ferment.<sup>1</sup> The first steps taken, and MM. d'Entragues thus placed in relation with Taxis, Zuniga, Morgan, and other malcontents, further conferences ensued, as the acts of the king offended, or the demeanour of Marie became more threatening. Madame de Verneuil, though it was said that she remained in total ignorance of the true nature of the designs contemplated, daily grew more exacting and insolent. During Henry's residence in Rouen, he wrote to his mistress desiring that she would send her son to St. Germain to be educated with M. le Dauphin: an order issued by the king, partly out of affection for his son; and partly that the young prince might thus remain a hostage in his hands for the fidelity and presence of his mother. Instead of thankfully accepting a proposal so honourable, Henriette returned the answer—"that she declined to allow her son to be educated with the royal bastard, son of the Florentine!" A reply more exasperating could not well have been uttered; yet the king had the weakness to pardon it, despite the advice of Rosny, to whom it was privately confided. Rosny again took opportunity to beseech the king to terminate a *liaison* degrading to himself, and apparently hateful to la Marquise. He exhorted the king to promote the marriage of Henriette with M. de Joinville; or with any other suitable person

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, Hist. de son Temps. Vie de Henriette de Balzac.—Dreux du Radier.

willing to espouse her; or to settle a liberal income upon her, and allow her to retire with her son from the realm, according to her repeated and clamorous demand. Rosny nevertheless confessed that there was a certain risk in allowing madame la Marquise, considering her pretensions, to leave the kingdom: at any rate, such a concession ought to be preceded by a voluntary surrender of the famous promise of marriage. Henry, in reply to this sage counsel, deplored the jealous and passionate disposition of the queen, with whom, he declared, it was impossible that he could live in concord. Rosny coldly replied, "that her majesty bore him profound veneration—but that she had received provocations of no slight magnitude, seeing that a mistress presumptuously claimed her rights, and pronounced her son illegitimate!" "Mon ami," said his majesty, "I find in the society of my wife neither solace, amusement, nor contentment; she is not gentle, nor does she possess the faculty of gliding smoothly over trifling differences; she does not try to accommodate herself to my temper and habits. When I enter her saloon, and approach to talk familiarly, and perhaps to salute her, she receives me with coldness, so that I often quit the chamber in pique, and depart to find pleasure and recreation elsewhere! When my cousin mademoiselle de Guise is at the Louvre, she is my resource; nevertheless, the said lady often tells me disagreeable truths, but she does it with so amiable and gracious an air that it is impossible to take offence." Henry then condescended to request Rosny to speak to

her majesty, and induce her to assume manners more becoming and amiable—but as the king refused to dismiss la Marquise from court; or to take any measures to silence her ungovernable tongue, the former promised his mediation with very little hope of success. It does not appear that Rosny, at this period, suspected that the kindred of madame de Verneuil held direct intercourse with the Spanish ambassador; though he distrusted their loyalty. Queen Marie, however, whether she received secret advices from Florence or from Rome, perseveringly asserted that Henriette de Balzac betrayed the secrets of her country; and that this the king would one day discover to his cost. Unfortunately the hate of the queen alternated from violent fury to sullen indifference; while in other and less important matters she displayed equal want of temper. It must be owned, however, that amid circumstances so peculiar and exasperating, Henry could not hope for domestic concord: no princess could have endured to become at once the object of the pity and speculation of her courtiers, while she lived in daily dread of formidable plots to annul her marriage, and to disinherit her son—projects, which received momentous countenance, by the public homage paid by the king to her rival; and by the royal acknowledgment that he had given a prior matrimonial promise.

While the king was at Rouen the petition of the banished Jesuit communities again occupied his attention. After much warfare in the cabinet, the recall of the order into France was resolved upon. Three

private reasons weighed with his majesty, and decided a resolve taken in defiance of the opinion of his most trusted counsellors, including Rosny. The dispensation for legalizing the marriage of the duchess de Bar—a matter which now claimed the serious solicitude of the king—seemed dependent on this concession; secondly, Henry had promised the pope to return the recent friendly offices of the Holy See, by showing some mark of special *bienveillance* to the order most favoured by his holiness; thirdly, Henry's idea of the learning of the fathers, and their extraordinary power of training the youthful mind, rendered him unwilling to deprive his kingdom of advantages so desirable. The sermons of father Cotton also had produced great effect on the royal conscience; so much so, that Henry insisted that his sister madame de Bar, and Rosny should attend a series of these addresses; being persuaded that the arguments of the eloquent Jesuit could not fail to convert the two most stubborn heretics of his realm! Madame obeyed her brother; but directed her chaplain Dumoulin to preach in refutation of every sermon delivered before her, to guard herself against the casuistry of the preacher. Rosny replied that he admitted that the sermons were discourses full of flowery rhetoric; but that the reverend father failed to prove his arguments. The king, however, signified his resolve to appoint Cotton to the important office of royal confessor and private almoner—a nomination which of course transported the court of Rome, and rendered the pope anxious to proffer every possible indication of



good-will. The important edict granting to the Jesuits domicile within the realm of France was signed at Rouen, September 25th, 1603.<sup>1</sup> The king, as an indication of good-will and confidence, established the society at La Flèche, in Anjou ; and made donation to the order of the magnificent patrimonial château of the house of Vendôme. This munificent foundation was subject to various conditions ; the most important of which were the exclusion of foreign Jesuits from La Flèche ; and that a dignitary of the community should be deputed to reside in Paris to preach before the court, to render any explanation which the king might require relative to the doings of the fraternity. It was further decreed that every Jesuit should take the oath of allegiance to the king ; and of submission to the laws of the realm. Villeroy, M. de la Varenne, and queen Marie contributed greatly to the restoration of the order by their countenance and entreaties. They represented that the Jesuit fathers were the tutors and instructors of the youth of Europe ; that no education was deemed finished unless vouched for by the diplomas of the order ; and, consequently, that the young men of France, in seeking education without the realm at Douay, Louvaine, and elsewhere, ran the risk of having their sympathies and allegiance alienated. This argument, though plausible, failed to convince M. de Rosny ; but seeing that the king was resolved on the restoration of these ecclesiastics, he refrained,

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, *Hist. de son Temps*. Mezerai. Sully, *Œconomies Royales*. Dupleix.



with his accustomed prudence, from offering useless opposition. Rosny, nevertheless, laid before the king his objections—reasons, which, it must be owned, consisted of a summary of future apprehensions, rather than of present and positive evil. Henry listened, and then replied, that there were but two courses open to him :—“ I must either banish, and enforce rigorously the penal edicts given against the order, or re-establish the society ; and so give the reverend fathers opportunity to demonstrate their alleged loyalty. The first resolve will reduce the fathers to despair ; and induce them to attempt and sanction all kinds of plots against my life, the fear of which would render me miserable and suspicious ; for there is no doubt that these said Jesuits are dexterous in the management of men’s minds. Therefore, *mon ami*, it would be better for me to be dead than to be subject to such apprehensions ; for I hold with Cæsar, that the most gentle death is that which is least anticipated.” No further opposition was offered by any of the ministers ; and his majesty’s words were afterwards quoted as prophetic.

Great, however, was the anger and consternation of the Parliament of Paris, when the edict was communicated to the Chambers. The exile of the fathers had been a measure proposed and voted unanimously by the members, and was recommended by them to the government. Opposition the most determined was organized ; and the first president, de Harlay, was deputed to petition his majesty to annul his edict. These remonstrances proving of no

avail, the members on the return of the king to Paris waited upon him in a body to expostulate; although the firmness evinced previously by his majesty in compelling the registration of edicts when once presented admonished MM. de la Cour of the inutility of such a step. Henry granted audience to the deputation on the 21st day of December, when news of happy import from Rome had more than ever decided the king to make the concession implored by his holiness. Henry entered the hall of audience, leading queen Marie by the hand, "as," said his majesty, "it is now my resolve to show my honour for the queen, by initiating her majesty into the most important events of my reign." The first president, Achille de Harley spoke the address, which reads like a *résumé* of the celebrated harangue of Arnaud on the arraignment of the order for the affair of Jean Châtel. The king replied with much severity of language and manner; for Henry deprecated remonstrance on this subject; one in which personal feeling was more than balanced by political considerations.

The members of the high court were not a little amazed, however, at the royal harangue, which vindicated the fathers from most of the past accusations launched against the order, instead of being confined to a temperate statement of the causes which seemed to sanction their re-establishment in France. Henry landed the ability demonstrated by the Jesuits at the Colloque de Poissy, holden by order of the late queen-mother in 1562. "If, as you allege, the Sorbonne has condemned them, it

is in ignorance of their merits. The university has cause to lament their exile, because the schools have been deserted, and all the scholars, despite of your edicts, have followed the fathers, wherever they have established colleges. They attract, by their learning, the finest minds in Europe. As for the complicity of the fathers in the conspiracies of the League, their misdeeds were the fallacy and misfortune of the era;—they thought to do well, but were mistaken, like in any other personages known to me. You allow that the king of Spain avails himself of the services of the fathers—I will, therefore, use them; for France shall not want that aid and learning which Spain and all Christendom deems indispensable for the education of youth. The fathers in question are Frenchmen, and my subjects; they will not betray my secrets, and if so, they shall not know more than I wish to communicate. Messieurs, allow me to legislate in this affair: I have brought this realm through greater difficulties; therefore obey me, and follow my commands without useless remonstrance.<sup>1</sup> Her majesty, at the termination of the address, spoke to de Harlay, and confessed her entire approval of the measure. “We would not,” said Marie, “that our son, nor the youth of France, should lack advantages which the most plebeian foreigners obtain

<sup>1</sup> Mathieu, *Hist. du Regne de Henri IV.*, t. 3. *Lettres Missives*, t. 6—Berger de Xivrey. “Le Mardy IX. la Cour fut assemblée pour le rétablissement des Jesuites que sa Majesté leur declara vouloir avoir lieu sans plus amples remonstrances ou declaration.”—*Journal de Henri IV.*

from the zeal and learning of the reverend fathers." After more agitation, the edict was registered on the express commands of the king; the fact being emphatically dwelt upon in the harangues of the partisans of the order—that the fathers could only open colleges in the towns and districts stated in the letters patent, decreeing their re-establishment. On the whole, public feeling was gratified by the restoration of the order; and soon its class-rooms were thronged with eager scholars. At court the influence of the fathers daily increased. Cotton was appointed to superintend the religious education of the dauphin, who soon manifested extraordinary attachment for his instructor. Marie committed the direction of her conscience to the Jesuit Gontier. While fathers Largebaston, Mâchant, and others—renowned for pulpit oratory—preached in rotation at the chapel royal within the Louvre. The pages in waiting, however, indulged in all manner of jests at the expense of the black-robed individuals who soon swarmed in the courts of the Louvre. As soon as a Jesuit father was observed, a derisive cry of "Cotton! Cotton!" was raised by these mischievous mimics, who all thereupon commenced a march in imitation of the gait of the fathers when wrapped in their ample *soutanes*. This mockery was not resented by the fathers, whose policy it was to conciliate. One day, however, his majesty was accidentally an unseen witness of the proceedings of his pages from a window of a gallery of the palace. Henry sent for the governor of the pages, and ordered that they should

each receive a dozen stripes; which punishment was duly inflicted. A few days subsequently, Father Cotton, while returning to the palace after dark, received a severe cut on the back of the head from some unknown assailant. Some personages attributed the assault to the Huguenots; others, with greater probability, to the vengeance of the pages. Inquiries were, nevertheless, suppressed, at the earnest request of Cotton, whose wound was not dangerous; and who foresaw in this occurrence the commencement of a cabal, which might be very detrimental to the stability and prosperity of the order in France.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV., année 1604. De Serres—Hist. de France, t. 6, p. 635, et seq.

## CHAPTER III.

1604.

Pope Clement VIII. grants the dispensation rendering legal the marriage of Madame—The conditions of the dispensation, and its able negotiation—Illness of the duchesse de Bar—Her miserable life—Her death, and obsequies at Vendôme—Grief of their majesties—Henry receives the condolence of the foreign ministers—Scruples of the nuncio—Disorders of the royal household—Feuds rage between the Tuscan envoy Giovannini and Concino Concini—The Grand Duke intervenes—His remonstrances—Quarrels of the king and queen—Madame de Verneuil and the Jesuit Gontier—Foreign alliances of France—Prosperous condition of the country—Treason of M. l'Hôte, secretary to Villeroy—His crime and death—Details—Villeroy is implicated in the revelations consequent on the crime—Correspondence of the king with Rosny on the subject—Death of cardinal d'Ossat.

THE discussions concerning the marriage of Monsieur and Madame de Bar, continued to occupy the French envoys at the court of Rome. The various concessions made to the Holy See by king

Henry ; the resolve demonstrated by Madame not to change her faith ; and the fact that it was now again alleged that an heir was likely to be born to the house of Lorraine, induced the Pope to abate from the rigour of his previous refusal to grant the requisite dispensation. On the 6th of December, therefore, Clement held a congregation, and announced that he was willing, by the advice of his Cardinals, to condescend to the prayer of M. de Bar, on certain conditions. The personages present at this council consisted of the four commissioners elected by the Pope to make inquiry as to precedents, and to report on the affair ; and nine cardinals. One of these commissioners, who held office in the Inquisition, protested against the concession, and also two of the Cardinals summoned—Ascoli and Borghese. The commissioners had made search throughout Europe for a precedent which might afford Clement an opportunity to conclude the affair, of which his holiness was heartily wearied. In a remote village of the Pays de Grisons, two sisters were at length discovered, who had married without papal dispensation, two brothers, heretics by creed ; after a long career of penitence, it was ascertained that these persons had obtained absolution, without the previous abjuration of the heretics. This obscure precedent was seized upon with avidity, argued and discussed under every aspect, and at length gladly declared an example which might legitimately be followed.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Lettre 354.—The village wherein this notable discovery had been made by the proctor Perotis was that of Caspano,

resolution being taken to grant the dispensation, its terms were subsequently debated. On the Friday following, December the 12th, the same personages met in conference; when it was settled to insert, as the conditions of the dispensation granted—"that the king, and MM. de Lorraine and de Bar, should solemnly engage to forward, by every means in their power, the conversion of Madame: that the children born, if any, were to be educated in the Romish faith—lastly, that the marriage should be solemnized again: the previous union, nevertheless, to all purposes to be held intact, though a repetition of the ceremony was enjoined. Clement ratified these proposals without demur. The way in which the brief should be despatched was next discussed. D'Ossat petitioned that the dispensation might be signed by the Pope, and authenticated by the fisherman's seal; and that the document should be sent to king Henry, and be, by him, forwarded to the duke of Lorraine, who would communicate it to his son and daughter-in-law. Clement, nevertheless, plainly stated his unwillingness, though supreme in the Church, to accept the sole responsibility of a dispensation which might affect the orthodoxy of the future dynasty of Lorraine. His holiness accordingly decreed that the dispensation should be forwarded in the shape of a letter mandatory, addressed to the cardinal-bishop of Verdun; and signed by the nine cardinals consulted. D'Ossat in the diocese of Como. The cardinals summoned to council were Ascoli, Borghese, Baronio, Bianchetto, Manteca, Arragone, Visconti, San-Marcello, and d'Ossat.



counselled that the prejudice, or fancy of the Holy Father, should be respected—"inasmuch as we have as much as we want, and nothing less." It was, therefore, decreed that the papal grace should be conveyed in form of a letter signed by the cardinals, and despatched to the cardinal de Verdun :—"the Christmas festivities have rather retarded its issue," writes d'Ossat ; "besides, Rome never hastens—and the present Pope less than any of his predecessors."<sup>1</sup> At length, therefore, this dispensation, the lack of which, and the consequent worry, had been for years wearing away the life and energy of Madame, was conceded—won by her own obstinate refusal to conform ; and by the favour shown by Henri Quatre to the Jesuits. That powerful body never ceased to agitate in Rome and elsewhere, until this mark of papal condescension had been vouchsafed to their august patron.

Madame, meantime, unhappy in her domestic affairs, and out of health, had arrived at St. Germain in August of the year 1603, during the journey which Henry took into Normandy. She remained in France for the rest of the year, anxiously watching the progress of the negotiation respecting her marriage, where her presence gave great content to the queen. The loving friendship which had once subsisted between the king and Madame, however, was impaired. Henry's

<sup>1</sup> Lettres du Cardinal d'Ossat—Lettres 367-8. "Dieu nous aura fait une belle grace d'avoir mis une si bonne fin à une affaire si difficile et si désespérée, comme je l'ai vu par l'espace de quatre ans et demi."

domestic life, and many of his public acts, were such as Madame utterly disapproved. The esteem which the duchess persisted in demonstrating towards her early friends, such as Duplessis Mornay, Bouillon, and Caumont, displeased the king; who, if he could not convert Madame, yet expected that while at his court she should make no demonstration of "Huguenoterie," or show favour to its adherents. M. de Bar equally worried the unfortunate duchess with solicitation and remonstrance. He continued his alternations of passionate regard and neglect: at times scarcely leaving Madame's saloon; at others, betaking himself from Nancy, and withholding all communication with her for weeks. The illness of the duchess created the strangest debates: of the five physicians consulted, only one, the *Sieur Louis de Metz*, agreed with Madame that pregnancy was the cause of her indisposition. The rest signified their opinion that the ailment of their patient was dropsy. The duchess refused to be convinced, and rejected all proper remedies; but eagerly swallowed any nostrum which was given her, on the assurance that such was likely to promote her hopes. The duke of Lorraine, meantime, declared himself to be of Madame's opinion; but stated his belief that her delivery was prevented by Satanic agencies, likely to dominate over her, so long as she persisted in her heresy. The cases of the young cardinal de Lorraine, and of the duke's relative, Dorothea duchess of Bavaria, were cited to Madame, as instances of the mercy and favour bestowed on the

orthodox. These personages had been afflicted with terrible chronic maladies, from which they were delivered by the prayers of a holy Ambrosian monk of Milan. This assertion actually made an impression on the strong mind of the duchess; and she observed, "that she deemed it strange and hard to behold those princes delivered from incurable maladies, whilst she was suffered to linger in anguish." "Madame," replied one of her Huguenot ladies, "be assured that the said monk is a sorcerer; and that through his brotherhood with the Author of Evil, he has been enabled to work the deliverance boasted of!" The intelligence that the dispensation was granted, and would arrive at Nancy before Easter of 1604, transported Madame with joy; and she despatched an express to St. Germain to thank king Henry; and to make his majesty partaker in the maternal hopes which she now trusted so soon to behold realised. Shortly afterwards the duchess set out on her return to Nancy, very infirm in health, but revived in spirit. Her departure occasioned much regret to queen Marie, who soon afterwards addressed to Madame the following letter:—

*Marie de Medici to Madame la duchesse de Bar.*<sup>2</sup>

"MA CHÈRE SŒUR,—I am sincerely chagrined to

<sup>1</sup> Mathieu, t. 2, liv. 7. De Serres, Hist. de Cinq Rois.—Vie de Henri IV.

<sup>2</sup> Marie de Medici a Madame la Duchesse de Bar, sa sœur.—MS. Bibl. Imp. Colbert 86, vol. 31.

learn that you are still persecuted by your cough : it is, however, a malady which, since your departure hence, has been so common here, that it appears to me as if everybody suffered. I fear that you found the roads heavy, from continued bad weather; but provided that you arrived at Nancy before the Foire de St. Nicholas, you have doubtless forgotten and forgiven the disagreeable adventures of your journey thither. The king mon seigneur, has decided not to leave here before the Foire de St. Germain ; so that I shall be able to send you tidings, and to make you participate in all our festive gallantries. I beg you, my dear sister, to continue to me your regard ; and to believe that you could not bestow your friendship where it is more prized than by myself. I shall continue in this opinion—though I should have esteemed my life more fortunately cast if we could have been more in each other's society. As this happiness has been denied to us, I seek consolation in your letters—the which tidings I pray you to continue to me, with your affection. I pray God, my dear sister, to have you in His holy keeping.

“ Your good sister,

“ MARIE.”

Madame continued afflicted by her cough, and by other troublesome symptoms, until the beginning of February, 1604, when she took to her bed. The conviction of her pregnant condition fatally prejudiced the duchess against the advice of her physicians, who descried her danger, and might, had their remedies been accepted, have prolonged her life. Madame, however, continued her confidence to the empirics, and the wise women, who confirmed her unhappy delusion. Amongst other

strange remedies administered by these people, it is recorded that Madame was made to swallow pills composed of scarlet silk chopped fine ! This treatment soon increased the violence of the malady ; so that the condition of the duchess admitted of little hope. M. de Bar and his father, therefore, despatched an express for king Henry's famous physicians, La Rivière and du Laurens, in the hope that their undoubted skill might induce the duchess to submit to the remedies prescribed. They found Madame on their arrival almost expiring ; yet so convinced that her fatal disorder was not dropsy, that the words, "Save my child !" were to the last perpetually on her lips.<sup>1</sup> In Lorraine the demise of the duchess was mourned with great outward fervour. M. de Bar secluded himself for several weeks in a monastery, and on his reappearance in the world, his pallid looks denoted, it was said, the severity of his sorrow. The duke de Lorraine his father, mourned the severance of the fraternal tie between the courts of Nancy and Paris ; and set himself to work with assiduity to convince the king of the affectionate regard he had borne towards Madame. Sinister reports, however, were soon current respecting the demise of the princess ; who throughout her illness had perseveringly refused the ministrations of her brother-in-law, the cardinal de Lorraine ; and had proclaimed her unflinching belief in the doctrines professed by the Reformed churches. The death of

<sup>1</sup> De Thou—Hist. de son Temps, liv. 132. "Elle mourût," says De Thou, "au milieu des plus vives douleurs."

Madame was a coincidence of provoking import for the papal court. Compelled by the solicitations and almost menaces of Henri Quatre to declare the union of Madame legitimate, suspicion was certain to be engendered. The fanaticism of her husband, and his belief that the birth of offspring would consummate his everlasting perdition, rendered probable the bold assertion of her favourite chaplain Télénus, "that, with matrimonial dispensation, Rome had attached to the brief a sentence of death to the contumacious heretic!" The disappointments, isolation, and persecution from which Madame never seems to have been exempt, undermined her constitution, and increased the constitutional injury inflicted by her mistaken notion relative to her malady. No sooner was her life extinct, than fresh broils arose at the court of Nancy, concerning the ceremonies to be observed, and the place of interment to be selected; for to deposit the body of Madame in the mausoleum of the dukes of Lorraine, seems an honour never contemplated. A mandate from the king terminated the controversy. His majesty notified his desire that the remains of Madame should be deposited in the vault where the ashes of her mother queen Jeanne, rested, in the chapel of the dukes de Vendôme, in the cathedral of that city.<sup>1</sup> The same ceremonies were observed as after the demise of Jeanne d'Albret. The corpse robed in white satin, a ducal coronet resting on its pale brow, lay in state for two days. Around the bier Madame's

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 17ème, Chron. Septenaire.

faithful chaplains kept sad vigil, and recited prayers. Subsequently the coffin was transported to the frontier of Lorraine, in great pomp of progress; and was there received by the officers of king Henry, who escorted the cortége to Vendôme. The service was read by Télénus and Duval in the presence of mesdames de Rohan, de Panglas, and other attached friends of the duchess. King Henry appeared to feel deeply the death of his sister. The intelligence was imparted by the duke de Bellegarde in the presence of the queen, who had shown much concern during the illness of the duchess. The king turned pale; his lips trembled, and he requested to be left alone, that he might realize the loss of the companion of his childhood. Henry then retired into his cabinet, "showing," says de Thou, "great outward affliction; although during the life of the princess he had appeared to neglect and slight her." The court assumed the deepest mourning, her majesty setting the example; and orders were issued that no person should enter the royal presence unless so attired. The foreign ambassadors offered condolence in state; with the exception of the nuncio, who was sorely embarrassed by his desire to retain his influence at the Louvre, and his dread of incurring the censures of his holiness. "Ah!" said the bishop, "you all of you lament, the bodily death of Madame la duchesse de Bar; I mourn the perdition of her soul!" These words being repeated to the king, Henry sent a message to the nuncio, to the effect that, although he would



not exact from the representative of the pope the outward homage of sorrow for the demise of Madame, yet that he could not receive him, or even tolerate his presence in the vicinity of the court, during the period allotted for the public mourning. This intimation greatly dismayed the nuncio ; many important affairs relative to the recall of the Jesuits were under consideration ; and the clamours of le Père Cotton, and other influential members of the order, were proportionably urgent that his majesty's feelings should not be lacerated by so signal a mark of disrespect. The legate, therefore, yielded, and putting himself and his equipage into mourning, he repaired to the Louvre, to pay his respects. "Sire," said he, "you marvel at my tardy condolence : nevertheless, being what I am, my regrets have been poignant. Consider, sire, that you have only had addressed to you condolences for the bodily demise of Madame la duchesse de Bar ; but I deplore the loss of her soul. Contumacious as Madame was, is not her eternal salvation in peril?" The king, shocked at this salutation, abruptly replied, "Your words, monseigneur, savour little of Christian reverence. We know that a last aspiration, a pang of intense sorrow, can send a soul heavenwards ; I therefore believe firmly that my sister is saved!" "Sire ! a conviction thus founded is to be regarded as a metaphysical theory rather than a solid and comforting reality !" The legate then proceeded to divers deductions, from whence the conversation was suffered to merge into the safer channel of a discussion on



the affairs under consideration by the council of state.<sup>1</sup> Henry, after the lapse of a few weeks, issued a commission empowering Rosny to take inventory and account of the property and jewels left by his deceased sister. Madame had country houses at St. Germain and Fontainebleau, besides her hôtel in Paris, and the small château of Castelbeziat, in the park of Pan. The debts of the duchess were at first supposed greatly to exceed the amount of property applicable for their discharge. Her jewels were, therefore, deposited as security for the payment of her creditors, and the hôtel de Soissons sold; a step which Henry afterwards regretted, and in vain tried to recall, when it was ascertained that the liabilities had been exaggerated. In memory of their old *liaison*, Madame's house in Paris was purchased by the count de Soissons for the sum of 100,000 livres; and no subsequent persuasions could induce him to transfer again the property to the king, though Henry eventually offered nearly double the amount he had disbursed. The pictures and cabinets of the duchess were divided between the king and M. de Bar; her jewels came eventually into the possession of Marie de Medici; her house at St. Germain Henry presented to the queen; while the hôtel at Fontainebleau his majesty made donation of to Madame de Verneuil.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mathieu, t. 2, liv. 7. Journal de Henri IV., ann. 1604. Olhagaray, Hist. de Foix et de Béarn.

<sup>2</sup> Economies Royales, chap. 30. Lettre du Roy a M. de Rosny.

The interior of Marie's household, meantime, presented a scene of confusion and cabal, fomented by the jealousies and reports of Concini and his wife. These personages ruled the queen with absolute sway, rendering themselves necessary by flattery, intrigue, and by reporting the sayings and doings of Madame de Verneuil. They profited by Marie's generosity; and by the credulous confidence she was wont to place in those by whom she believed herself beloved. They spoke to her of Italy; and maintained alive her interest in persons once favoured by the princess Marie, but who were deemed too insignificant to be brought under the notice of the queen. Through Madame Concini, Marie communicated with her cousin, the duke de Bracciano—a correspondence which she well knew was displeasing to the king, who had imbibed a jealousy of this intercourse. Eleanore, though now promoted to the summit of her ambition, was still humble in deportment, and asserted no pretensions: the great ladies of the household seldom found themselves in contact with the *dame d'atour*. Marie, however, in Italian fashion, took afternoon *siesta*, reclining on mattresses in an inner cabinet. Madame Concini then had her opportunity; and sometimes was so successful in kindling her majesty's quick temper, that the period destined for repose often passed in stormy excitement. The personages chiefly pursued at this period by Eleanore were the Tuscan envoy Giovannini, and Madame de Verneuil. Rosny occasionally fell under the lash of Eleanore's mendacious tongue,—though her

dread of the stern minister was intense. Concini resented the manner in which Giovannini ignored his presence at the French court; and refused to admit him to any of the secrets, or the festivities of the Tuscan legation. He reasonably concluded that, if the ducal envoy had been profuse in courteous countenance, his position in France would have been more distinguished. Concini was only her majesty's subordinate equerry; but his ambition soared to Giovannini's office, and to the functions of a chamberlain. Consequently the pair omitted nothing to widen the feud between the queen and the envoy of her uncle, in the hope of obtaining Giovannini's recall; and possibly the appointment of M. Concini himself to the vacant post—a concession which duke Ferdinand might offer to his royal niece. They dwelt on the disrespect shown by Giovannini to the mandate sent by her majesty, forbidding him to visit at the hotel of the favourite; and on the vexatious details which he transmitted to Florence, all which tended to exasperate the grand duke, and to alienate the king. Marie indignantly resented the letters addressed to her by her uncle; who plainly expressed his disgust and sorrow at the cabals which compromised her own position, and rendered that of her royal husband ridiculous. Ferdinand quoted the politic conduct of Catherine de Medici, who triumphantly surmounted perils to which Marie was yet a stranger, by her gracious and ready tact. He exhorted her to study the French language, to which the queen had suddenly taken an aversion, and,

therefore, affected to address the courtiers in Italian ; and, above all, to discard the sentence reported as often falling from her lips, *i Francesi son traditori*.<sup>1</sup> As for the royal mistress, the grand duke counselled her majesty to silence the traducers of Madame Henriette ; and to condescend to win her husband from a *liaison*, which report stated had become burdensome, by gentleness ; and by abjuring the austere pride so distasteful to his majesty, who liked witty and lively women. Finally, the grand duke reminded her majesty that the king esteemed and respected her capacity ; in token of which Henry had intimated his intention to nominate her to the regency in case she survived him ; and had on more than one occasion declared such intent, by addressing her publicly as *Madame la Regente*.

Giovannini, meantime, wrote to the grand duke complaining of the persecution which he endured ; and recounting that Concini had threatened him with assassination. The wrath of duke Ferdinand was greatly kindled : he addressed a reprimand to Concini ; and stated his intention to summon the king to deliver up so traitorous a subject, to undergo the castigation such conduct merited. “ God pardon Madame Cristina our most serene consort, and the cavaliere de Vinta, who both persuaded me to permit you to visit France ; although I, who knew your genius for intrigue, felt intense repugnance to grant the said permission. You have driven away many poor and worthy Italians who would have served the queen

<sup>1</sup> Istoria del Granducato, lib. v.

faithfully, purely out of caprice and in order the better to bend her majesty to your chimerical projects. Now that the queen ought to give her attention to state affairs, and to make friendly alliance with the royal ministers, the dearest friends of her lord the king, you place impediment by filling her mind with bagatelles; and so prevent her majesty from gaining the affections of the princes and princesses of the blood, by courteous and loving offices. Know, signor, that if you offend my minister, you insult me! Remember your obligations to this our house, which your grandfather and your brother have faithfully served.”<sup>1</sup> The duke adds more in the same tone of reproof: nevertheless, the remedy for the disorders of the household was the recall of Concini and his wife—a measure which it is astonishing Ferdinand did not adopt, as he would have been supported by the approval and authority of the king. The ducal letter exasperated the queen; though it compelled Concini to submit to outward reconciliation with the envoy. His public submission, as might be expected, was avenged by private malice still more malignant. Incited by her favourite, Marie thus addressed the grand duke, in a style which greatly offended king Henry, and increased the discord which reigned during the spring and summer of 1604, between the royal pair:

<sup>1</sup> *Istoria del Granducato*, lib. v.

*Queen Marie to the Grand-Duke of Tuscany.*<sup>1</sup>

“MON ONCLE,—I have already admonished you of the displeasure which I feel at the residence here of Basilio Giovannini; and how disagreeable I esteem him personally, moved thereto by special causes. I again beg you to recall this said personage; and I warn you that his presence here is so odious and insupportable to me, that, unless you resolve, or he determines to remove hence speedily, I shall be compelled myself to dismiss him with ignominy—the which I should long ago have accomplished, did I not fear to fail in my respect towards yourself. Therefore, mon oncle, I pray you to send for this personage; or do not complain if I manage this thing in my own way. I pray God, mon oncle, to have you in His holy keeping!

“MARIE.”

This letter was deemed so disrespectful by the grand-duke, that he made complaint of its tenor to king Henry; adding some disagreeable comments on the disgrace of such dissension at the court “of a hero who had conquered France inch by inch, and yet could not manage two unruly women.” Henry consequently felt still greater alienation towards his kindred of Medici; and in consequence of his majesty’s sharp expressions, the duke declined to nominate another envoy, in case Giovannini was compelled to quit the realm. In order, therefore, to strengthen himself against the enmity of France, Ferdinand drew closer his friendly relations with Philip III.

<sup>1</sup> Marie de Medici à Don Ferdinand, Grand Duc de Florence, MS. Bibl. Imp. Colbert, 86, fol. 17.

Another animated discussion ensued at this period between Rosny and his royal master, on the subject of the unbridled temper of the queen. Rosny again reiterated his opinion that the only remedy for these *tracasseries* was to pack the Italians of the household over the frontier: the next step would then be to command the toleration by the queen of the presence of Henriette de Balzac in Paris; or to dismiss the latter from court, and give every satisfaction to her majesty. Henry declared that, could he place confidence in the queen's attachment and good sense, he would not hesitate to give her this mark of deference: he knew, however, that her suspicious jealousy and haughty temper were such, that she would soon find a new subject of complaint; that she hated his illegitimate children—even those born before their union. Rosny suggested that it was useless to argue without coming to any advisable conclusion; that his majesty though deeply aggrieved refused to have recourse to persuasive measures, or to assert his authority; that the queen's enterprise against the Tuscan envoy was unjustifiable, and that it would be a favourable opportunity to dismiss Concini and his wife, and Caterina Selvaggio, when probably her majesty would be better counselled. Henry expressed his approval; and authorised Rosny to make the proposal to the queen during a visit he was about to pay to the capital. He gave Rosny authority to promise various pecuniary advantages; and to assure her majesty of his fidelity, provided that she gave her consent



to the departure of the Concinis. Rosny undertook the disagreeable errand, though he states that he had no faith in his powers to soothe or to influence the queen. Marie's frequent pecuniary necessities luckily rendered her anxious to conciliate Rosny; while Concini was assiduous in his court in that quarter, and especially towards madame de Rosny. The expenses of the queen's household were enormous, and amounted to more than 345,000 livres annually. She was munificently generous; and but few of the courtiers were without some splendid token of her regard in jewels or fine pictures. When refused fresh pecuniary advances, it was Marie's habit to weep passionately in the presence of her royal husband; and sometimes she even threatened to pawn the crown jewels. It happened, therefore, that on the morning of Henry's departure for Paris, a proposal was made to the queen to obtain an edict granting certain privileges to the collectors of the tax called *la gabelle* of Languedoc; and for which the bribe of 80,000 livres was offered. It appears that in this reign such bribes were tendered to the highest personages, without discredit accruing to their dignity or integrity. Marie, at any rate, imparted the proposal to Rosny, to whom she sent the steward of her household, M. d'Argouges, with a message requesting the privilege for her petitioners; and directing him to leave a copy of the proposed edict with the minister. Rosny seized his advantage, and stated that the grant in question might be made without injury to the public service; but

that his majesty was so displeased at certain occurrences in which the queen was implicated, that he must decline to ask the favour, unless her majesty furnished explanations which might pacify her royal consort. Rosny soon after received a summons to confer with Marie—and the two entered into a grand detail of the grievances and cabals of the court. “Never, monsieur, can I resolve to tolerate or receive a woman who presumes to rival my royal state, and who brings up her children to disdain mine. She dares conspire against this realm; and yet the king, blinded by his infatuated passion, perceives it not.” Marie then demanded that madame de Verneuil should be compelled to restore the promise of marriage given to her by the king; saying, that she believed that to be the only possible way by which full and sincere reconciliation could ensue. She then alluded to the beauty and promise of the young dauphin; and pathetically bewailed that his birthright should be assailed by an audacious family, and yet that king Henry refrained from punishing so insolent an enterprise; and especially the offensive deportment of M.d’Entragues and the count d’Auvergne. There was much truth, and undoubted grievance to be redressed, set forth in Marie’s expostulation; and no personage was more sensible of the fact than Rosny. The injudicious partisanship by which Marie sought to avenge her wrongs, her unbridled tongue and haughty disdain, were nevertheless evils which increased the misery of her position. Though Henry was too tender-hearted to punish or repress these sallies, yet

they made him weary in the queen's society; and destroyed that conjugal influence which might have been the antidote to such irregularities.

The queen then insinuated that, these her demands granted, she would not oppose reforms in her household. She, however, maintained that Concini and his wife were humble, and without ambition; that la Caterina had no interest out of the royal wardrobe chamber; and that Giovannini was an ally of, and an abettor of the treasonable projects of la Marquise. After much persuasion, and on the promise that the edict relative to the tax-gatherers of Languedoc should be expedited, the queen was persuaded to write to her royal husband and express her sorrow for the late *brouillerie*; and to request Henry to return to Fontainebleau, as a virtual separation had existed between their majesties for some interval. The letter was written, and despatched by a cabinet messenger. Henry immediately replied thereto in indulgent language; and promised to return to Fontainebleau, expressly to escort the queen back to Paris. The same courier brought her majesty letters; and one—probably written by Mademoiselle de Guise—which gave detail of a festive banquet given by Zamet, to which Henry had conducted Madame de Verneuil. Marie's ire was instantly ablaze; and instead of following up Rosny's good advice, by returning a written welcome to Henry's notification, she sent a verbal message to the effect, "that, as the king was so soon to be expected, she would willingly wait his

arrival." The king in his turn felt pique ; and relieved it by writing the following letter to Rosny :

*The King to M. de Rosny.*<sup>1</sup>

"MON AMI,—I wrote yesterday to my wife, but she has not deigned to make me any written reply, excusing her omission, because I told her I should see her early to-day. This she was wrong in doing. I have, therefore, determined not to leave this to-day, but to-morrow I shall probably be at Fontainebleau. Yesterday morning I got a letter from my wife, in which I recognised your hand and style—and not her own, or that of M. de Sillery. Her temper is very uncertain ; and unless you guide it, it will become still more unmanageable. When I remember the words which she used in my presence the day before yesterday, they weigh on my heart and mind. As for my bodily health, it is good, thank God ! I find much intrigue going on in the quarter influenced by M. d'Auvergne : if he has reckoned well in one place, he has not the less done so in another. I fear disturbances may arise from the strange things which I hear. Yesterday I went to St. Germain to see my children : I found my son well ; but my daughter so ill that it is a marvel that she is alive. Yesterday ma cousine de Soissons was delivered of a son—which has caused great joy to her husband, and to herself. I saw M. de Comte a little after the event in his stoical mood ; he declared to me, ' that as misfortune never depressed him, so fortune never elated or dazzled him ; but that under circumstances he was always himself ! ' Adieu, mon ami ! Wednesday this 12th of May, at Paris.

" HENRY."

<sup>1</sup> Œconomies Royales, ch. 39.

A partial reconciliation ensued between the royal pair on the arrival of the king—which was promoted by Rosny, and by Madame Concini; who, notwithstanding her unpopularity, seems to have been the least unreasonable of the many unreasonable people who surrounded her majesty. Marie wept, and the example was followed by her consort. Henry promised to obtain back the promise of marriage which he had given to Henriette de Balzac; and to restrain her presumption. The royal pair embraced, and resolved for the future to disbelieve injurious reports, to live in harmony, and to enjoy the splendours of their position. One retort made by the king dwelt, however, some time in the susceptible mind of Marie; during the heat of their dissension, the queen, as some excuse for her extravagant expenditure, pleaded the large dowry she had brought to her husband. “True, madame, your uncle purchased the alliance of France; and this done, his munificent donations to me now consist in cargoes of lemons and oranges!” The birth of a son to M. de Soissons also gave the queen satisfaction; for the count, who always opposed the king when possible, invariably became the friend of those who deemed themselves victims of royal oppression. M. de Soissons and his consort were on the whole well matched; and, though their life was also diversified by petty squabbles, they soon made it up, neither of them harbouring ill-will. Madame de Soissons was a very comely woman, and might have been called handsome, but for her eyes, which were too prominent. The palaces of M. de

Soissons were filled with tender reminiscences of the duchess de Bar; and in every room which he inhabited hung a portrait of the princess. The countess bore all without jealousy; and united with her husband in bearing reverent testimony to the virtues and religious constancy of Madame.

Henry and Marie returned to celebrate Easter at the Louvre; and, as the queen's humour was improved, the festivities of the court passed off with *eclat*. Her majesty's satisfaction was enhanced by a public rebuke which her rival received from Father Gontier, whose sermons at the church of St. Gervais drew crowded congregations. As the king attended these services, the ladies of the court were also assiduous, and especially Madame de Verneuil; who was conspicuous during the Lenten season of 1604 for her public devotion. The king occupied a fauteuil on the gospel side of the altar—and the great ladies were accommodated with seats opposite. Gontier had, on several occasions, expressed annoyance at the interruptions occasioned by the late arrivals of several of these ladies; whose rustling apparel, and whispered greetings, occasioned irreverent diversion. One day Madame de Verneuil arrived after the king had taken his place, accompanied by her young and lovely sister, Mademoiselle Marie de Balzac. The ladies exchanged salutations with his majesty; and, taking their chairs, continued to waft to him signals, attended by gestures and suppressed laughter. The indecorum of this conduct incensed the bold Jesuit, who held the office of confessor to

queen Marie. He paused in his sermon, and, addressing his majesty, said : “Sire, will you never cease to come to the house of God without being followed by these women, whose levity within these sacred precincts is a scandalous sacrilege? Sire, silence and reverence are due, even by your majesty, in the court of the King of kings!” Madame de Verneuil in vain afterwards solicited that a *lettre de cachet* might consign the Jesuit to the Bastille; Henry jested, but refused to allow Gontier to be molested. A few days subsequently, the king again attended St. Gervais, and entered the church as Gontier was leaving the sacristy to ascend his pulpit. Henry stopped the preacher, and thanked him for his rebuke, which he acknowledged had been merited; “nevertheless, mon père, I request you in future to administer such paternal corrections in private.”<sup>1</sup> The act of the Jesuit orator was very generally applauded; the ladies of the court, misled by the evil example set them by their royal master, indulged often in unseemly levities, which were sometimes followed by their dismissal from the service of the queen, who was inexorable in banishing such culprits. After her return to the Louvre, Marie discovered, through Madame Concini, that one of her maids of honour, Mademoiselle de Sagonne, accorded midnight interviews to M. de Termes, the brother of Bellegarde. The queen immediately laid an information against Termes, whose head she demanded, in virtue of an

<sup>1</sup> Sauval—Hist. des Galanteries des Rois de France. Hist. de Paris.



ancient law, which thus punished all violators of the sanctity of the royal abode. So implacable did Marie prove, that M. de Termes was compelled to seek foreign service; while Mademoiselle de Sagonne, after enduring a severe chastisement by order of the queen, was ignominiously dismissed from court. Marie further proceeded to remove the *gouvernante* of the maids of honour, Madame de Drou, for neglect, in not having more vigilantly guarded the chamber of the damsels committed to her charge. The queen rejected the mediation of the fathers Cotton and Gontier; being resolved to show herself inflexible in all matters which concerned maidenly honour, and chastity. Perhaps Marie had her reasons for acting with such severity, being at this period again at issue with the king, who, prompted by his mistress, insisted that Mademoiselle de Balzac should be enrolled amongst her majesty's maidens. Marie de Balzac possessed the beauty, without the sprightly wit of her sister; and had already been rendered conspicuous by the bold admiration of Bassompierre. When Henry happened to be writhing under an infliction of the pretended pious scruples of Madame la Marquise, he avenged himself by paying homage to her sister, whose beauty he admired—a new phase of the suppleness of the Balzac family, not likely to render a *débutante* of the race acceptable to the queen. Marie, therefore, firmly refused the services of a lady of repute so doubtful.

Amid these domestic disquietudes, fomented by his own reprehensible follies, the foreign relations

of the king prospered. Abroad, always the hero and the great king, the name of Henri Quatre was uttered with veneration. The *entente* with England prospered; and cordial intercourse was established between the sovereigns. James, delighted in inditing erudite epistles to his loving brother of France; whose sword he however esteemed more highly than his learning. The sovereigns exchanged their portraits, as did also Anne and Marie; and a serious discussion ensued as to the future alliance of king James's heir with the little Madame Elizabeth. Henry demonstrated much interest in the conspiracy of Lord Cobham, and in the fate of the delinquents. The project was the revival of an old conspiracy which had been organised to harass the declining years of queen Elizabeth; and as such had been long ago communicated to Henry's ambassador in Rome. The disappointment of the ultra-Romanists of England not to be met by larger concession from the son of Mary Stuart; and the subtle suggestions of Spain, who hoped thus to drive James to conclude alliance, had brought about a revival of the design. The motive of the pardon granted by James to the condemned noblemen, when under the headsman's axe, was curiously inquired into by Henry; who was jealously sensitive of every act which served to reflect on his abandonment of the duke de Biron to suffer the penalty of treason. "I should be glad, M. de Beaumont, to know the cause which moved my good brother to show clemency to the said mylords, whose detention in prison will be more per-

nicious than politic." Fears lest the Spanish cabinet had interfered to mitigate the penalty, agitated the French council. Taxis, Richardot, and Velasco had been received by James; and the former had negotiated an amicable treaty, which was signed and ratified, on behalf of Philip III., by Velasco; who was at this period in London, flattered and feasted by their majesties, and apparently highly gratified with his reception. Henry had the greater cause for suspicion, as the first act of the new drama concocted for the overthrow of his own throne was in process of being unfolded. Spain bribed by her gold; and unfortunately most of the public offices in France were filled by needy adventurers, sharp-witted and able, whose supreme object was to retrieve the ruin inflicted by the long period of civil warfare. Peace between England and Spain had been difficult to negotiate; for impediments had arisen, which Philip's minister little anticipated from the son of Mary Stuart. The articles of pacification were accepted grudgingly, and with evident reservation by king James; whose ideas concerning the delinquency of the "Dutch rebels" had suddenly undergone modification. The most important article of the treaty was, that king James should fix a day by which the rebel provinces were to crave peace of the archdukes; in case the States declined to make such overture, James promised to withdraw his aid. A thousand pretexts, nevertheless, it was felt might avail the king to delay the proclamation of this momentous period: the Spanish cabinet was beginning to

feel foiled in its meditated vengeance against Maurice and Henri Quatre, when the fear lest James was in earnest, unexpectedly served the cause of the archduke by causing the surrender of Ostend, after a siege of three years. Satisfied by this negative triumph, peace was proclaimed by the Spanish ministers between the crowns; and thus assured of the neutrality, if not of the friendship of king James, their envoys had leisure to concoct manœuvres against the tranquillity of France. The solution of the secret of king James's lukewarm adherence to the government which had befriended his mother, they felt would be found in the diplomatic correspondence of Henri Quatre. The department likely to contain this correspondence was that under Villeroy; and unfortunately the staff of that zealous minister harboured a traitor. The much-trusted secretary of M. de Villeroy was Nicholas l'Hôte, the son of an ancient retainer of Villeroy, and the godson of the minister. The latter greatly interested himself in the fortunes of this young man; and with the intention of eventually giving him the post which l'Hôte at this period occupied, Villeroy had sent him to Spain with M. de Rochepot, to learn the language, and to study the policy of the Spanish ministers. While at Madrid, l'Hôte made the acquaintance of one Rassis, a refugee leaguer from Bordeaux, whose criminal antecedents prevented him from returning to his country under benefit of the amnesty granted by the king. The ambition and wit of l'Hôte

chafed at his slow rise in the career of diplomacy—he desired swiftly to realise riches and celebrity. His foible being observed by the secretaries Idiaquez and Prato, he was deemed a hopeful subject for the accomplishment of the designs of Spain. L'Hôte, therefore, beheld himself treated as a man of importance in Madrid; and tempted and dazzled, he in an evil hour sold himself as a spy to the Spanish government. On his return to France, Villeroy installed l'Hôte as chief secretary of the foreign department of the ministry: and initiated him in the secret of the cipher used to communicate with the French ambassador in Madrid; also he admitted him to the privilege of being present at the first reading of all foreign despatches, which were afterwards intrusted to him to abridge previous to their perusal by his majesty. Meantime, important secrets of state got abroad, no one could divine how: and M. Barrault at Madrid, Luxembourg at Rome, and M. de Beaumont in London, complained that the contents of their despatches was known before they themselves received them. There had been a mystery also connected with one of the most important despatches sent by Rosny from London to king Henry; which it was stated had been delivered at the office of Villeroy, and had never since been forthcoming.

M. de Barrault having one day business to transact with the nuncio in Madrid, found that the papal envoy knew more of the transaction than he himself did—in fact, that the contents of a despatch recently addressed to M. de Luxembourg in Rome

was quoted by his eminence, a copy of which Barrault was expecting by the next courier. In extreme consternation Barrault wrote privately to the king, counselling him to distrust, and cause all the clerks of his foreign-office to be watched—a warning which Henry confided to Rosny. The latter at once asserted that the culprit was in Villeroy's office, as Barrault suspected; but despite the utmost caution and vigilance, the traitor could not be detected. The Spanish ministry, being so well served by M. l'Hôte, began to neglect Raffis, whom they had previously largely bribed. This man therefore vowed to discover the traitor by whom he had been supplanted. His *liaison* with the refugee leaguers in Madrid was extensive; and from one of these persons Raffis accidentally learned, in the course of conversation, that one Nicholas l'Hôte, secretary to M. de la Rochepot, had several years previously betrayed certain secrets to the Spanish government; which timely information secured the liberty of individuals implicated in the late troubles, and whose arrest had been decreed by the Parliament of Toulouse. To trace this dishonest secretary Raffis applied himself. He soon learned that l'Hôte had been promoted to the important post of chief clerk under Villeroy, and was employed in making abstracts of every despatch received. Raffis, now no longer at a loss to indicate the person who had supplanted him, waited upon M. de Barrault, and offered to denounce the traitor, provided that pardon, and a small pension, was secured to himself. He, however, made condition that the

offer should be communicated directly to the king ; in fear lest it might come to the knowledge of Villeroy, and through him to that of the culprit—though unfortunately, he did not state that especial reasons existed to withhold the information from the minister. Barrault promised the reward ; but seeing no cause to deviate from the usual routine of business at the dictation of a man of the calibre of M. Rassis, he communicated the information in his weekly packet addressed to Villeroy. The parcel was opened by M. l'Hôte, in the presence of the minister ; who soon after waited on the king, communicated the intelligence, and returned from the palace with the conditions demanded by Rassis signed by his majesty, and authenticated by his own counter-signature. This paper was the same night despatched to Barrault, so important had it become to detect the traitor. In due time the royal promise arrived, and was communicated to Rassis. The signature of Villeroy attracted the eye of this individual ; for had the affair been alone confided to his majesty, the document would have been signed by the king's private secretary, de Lomenie. In great consternation, therefore, Rassis explained his reasons for the request made to Barrault. The latter at once descried the peril which menaced the life of Rassis ; but congratulated himself on the forethought which had induced him to command the immediate attendance of the latter. By the direction of the ambassador, Rassis departed straight from the embassy to the frontier, being furnished with a horse and with money ; while a messenger



departed by a contrary route, carrying a despatch detailing the affair, and addressed to the king.

M. l'Hôte, meantime, had not been idle: he sent information to the secretary Idiaquez that their treachery was discovered, unless measures were taken to silence Rassis before he could make further revelations. Four hours after the departure of Rassis, therefore, his abode was surrounded by archers sent to arrest and convey him to St. Lucar—the dépôt for galley slaves, and criminals of the worst description, from whence, of course, he never more would have been liberated.

Barrault despatched his secretary, Descartes, with M. Rassis. After many perils, the pair arrived safely in France, and took the road to Fontainebleau, which they reached on the 22nd of April, 1604. On the way they met Villeroy, who was going to the palace from his house at Juvisy. He recognised Descartes, and at once asked if he came to give information respecting the traitor? The affair was explained to Villeroy; and both Rassis and Descartes counselled the minister to order the immediate arrest of his clerk; the latter even offering to proceed to Paris and accomplish the matter. Villeroy hesitated, and finally decided to take the royal orders on the affair—a want of firmness which excited much unjust suspicion, as it was alleged that there could be no doubt of the propriety of such arrest. To Villeroy, therefore, it accidentally fell to disclose the delinquency of his *employé*—a task doubly distasteful, as the memory of his past connection with the League was fresh; and it

was believed by Rosny that he still cherished a hankering after Spanish politics. Henry was walking on the grand terrace with Rosny when Villeroy approached, holding in his hand Barrault's despatch, which he had received from Descartes. His majesty, with many expressions of indignation, after he had perused the document, ordered the arrest of l'Hôte; and reproached his minister for his suspicious want of promptitude. Villeroy replied, "that his clerk was expected from Paris, and was doubtless then at Juvisy;"—and with these words he quitted the presence to give the requisite order.

Meantime, advices had been forwarded to the Spanish ambassador in Paris, Don Balthazer de Zuniga, of the flight from Spain of M. Rassis, with directions to favour the escape of l'Hôte. M. de Thou states that l'Hôte immediately fled from Paris, accompanied by a Flemish soldier, and took the road towards Meaux. Villeroy, nevertheless, in the statement, which, out of regard for his reputation, he put forth, gives a different version of the flight; which was so far believed, that Rosny, in his *Memoirs*, adopts the relation on the word of the former. According to Villeroy, he returned to his château, and there found the bishop of Chartres, and other personages of note. He conferred leisurely with them before giving the mandate for the capture of the culprit, who meantime arrived from Paris, being ignorant that any catastrophe was imminent. Some officious personage informed him that couriers had unexpectedly arrived from Madrid; when l'Hôte, fearing that his treason was known, excus-

ing himself on the plea of hunger, left the apartment, and fled from Juvisy. Villeroy, when he had dismissed his visitors, then, and only then, prepared to execute the arrest which had been so strictly enjoined by the royal lips. The finale of the incident is related without variation by contemporary historians. Pursuit was made to capture the culprit, with such energy that the archers came upon l'Hôte as he was about to cross the river Seine, near la Ferté. In his haste, he missed the ford, and falling into deep water was drowned; not without suspicion that his companion, the Flemish soldier, had some hand in the disaster, by order of the Spanish ambassador; who had every reason to deprecate the revelations likely to be made by l'Hôte in the torture-chambers of the Bastille.<sup>1</sup> The death of l'Hôte increased the suspicions against Villeroy, who, Rosny states, with some triumph, "was overwhelmed with grief at the disaster;" but the humiliation of his great political rival is too complacently dwelt upon by the former. The king does not seem to have suspected his minister. Villeroy, however, according to the royal letter given by Rosny, found it advisable to implore pardon on his knees,—probably for his neglect in not having caused the immediate arrest of so notable a traitor—and not, as Rosny ungenerously insinuates, to obtain pardon for his own collusion! Henry writes: "For some time I was in doubt what to believe respecting l'Hôte,

<sup>1</sup> Sully, Mem.—liv. 17ème. De Thou—Hist. de son Temps. Dupleix, t. iv.

clerk to M. de Villeroy, who fled, and was eventually found drowned; but at length I took pity on the latter, who, with tears in his eyes, sighs from the mouth, sorrow in the heart, and knees on the ground, implored my pardon, the which I could not refuse. In order that he may take courage again to serve me, I pray you to write to him a letter of civil condolence, assuring him of your friendship.”<sup>1</sup> The expressions used by the king are certainly strong respecting a great minister pleading forgiveness for an error of judgment; but the only copy of Henry’s letter now extant, is the transcription given by Rosny himself, who always acrimoniously assails Villeroy. The latter, with his smooth tongue and ready resource, was by far the most popular personage; the austerity and rude frankness of Rosny exposed him to sarcasm and ill-will. He was regarded as the censor-general of the government; as all Henry’s ministers, Sillery, Villeroy, Bellièvre, and Loménie, were men remarkable for courteous polish of speech and manner.

A great displacement of government officials ensued after the discovery of the treason of M. l’Hôte: the ciphers were changed, and their key was forbidden to be communicated to subordinate personages. The most distant reserve was maintained towards Zuniga; who, nevertheless, continued his devices, being in constant communication with M. d’Auvergne; who, in his turn, cheated the king into the belief that he was in-

<sup>1</sup> (*Economies Royales*, ch. 33, edit. orig. Also, *Lettres Missives*, t. 6.

triguing for the service of the crown, and reporting all conferences to his majesty. Henry's credulity cannot be sufficiently marvelled at : aware of the discontent of Madame de Verneuil, and of the angry humiliation, pretended or true, stated to be felt by her father at her position, he yet, in a manner, afforded his royal sanction to the *liaison* of her brother, M. d'Auvergne, with the ministers of Philip III. M. Rassis, to whose penetration the discovery of the treasonable communications was due, received 3,000 livres ; the discharge of the debts he had contracted in Spain ; and a pardon for past excesses, with permission to reside in France.

During the spring of the year 1604 France lost an able diplomatic servant in the cardinal d'Ossat, who died at Rome a few weeks after the duchesse de Bar, whose cause he had so untiringly pleaded. Unfortunately, d'Ossat had incurred the enmity of Rosny ; who resented the friendship professed by this eminent prelate for Villeroy ; and who unreasonably complained of his want of illustrious extraction, which, according to Rosny, unfitted him for place in the Sacred College. The true cause of Rosny's dislike was, that the cardinal omitted to pay him sufficient deference ; or, like du Perron, to acknowledge him to be the chief pillar in the fabric of the government. As lord treasurer, Rosny had ample opportunity of testifying his dislike ; and on several occasions he ungenerously retarded the payment of the slender pittance doled out to the cardinal, who possessed no hereditary revenue, so as to render the position of d'Ossat peculiarly dis-

troubling. The grand fault of Rosny was, that he resented a personal attack or misrepresentation as an injury done to his royal master and the realm : this susceptibility, of course, roused an army of opponents, whose enmity one day even overwhelmed the renowned minister. Villeroy and M. de Soissons were not enemies to be despised ; neither was the displeasure of queen Marie at Rosny's public disapproval of her intolerance an event of small moment. As for monsieur and madame Concini, and the smaller hornets of the queen's household, Rosny treated their feuds with profound contempt ; and wrathfully resisted their inroads on the treasury. Intrenched in his Arsenal, and secure of the royal favour, M. de Rosny advised the king, reprimanded his majesty and his royal consort, and offered combat to Henriette de Balzac with impunity ! His self-appreciation was boundless as his fidelity to his master ; whom Rosny served with an enlightenment which was not to be diverted from its object by personal interest or political cabal.

## CHAPTER IV.

1604.

Madame de Verneuil and Henri Quatre—Intrigues and ingratitude of la Marquise—Formal demand made to the Balzac family from the Council of State for the restoration of the famous promise *de matrimonio in futurum*—Correspondence of the king with Madame de Verneuil—Details of the conspiracy to exclude the young dauphin from the succession, and to proclaim his illegitimacy of birth—The count d'Auvergne retires from court—His abode at Vie—Receives M. d'Escures—Madame de Verneuil retires to Malesherbes—She refuses to see the king—Requests permission to leave the realm—She restores the written promise of marriage to King Henry on certain conditions—Brief tranquillity of the court—The children of France—Fresh revelations ensue on the designs of MM. d'Entragues and d'Auvergne—Treachery of la Marquise—Intended treaty with Spain—Arrest of M. d'Auvergne—Transfer of the count to the Bastille—Warrants are issued for the arrest of M. d'Entragues—Marcoussy—Arrest of M. d'Entragues—He is conveyed to the Conciergerie—His severe treatment—Arrest of Madame de Verneuil—Her haughty and insolent deportment—The council orders her committal to the Conciergerie—



Her grief, and refusal to obey the mandate—Papers seized at Marcoussy—Intercession is made for the criminals by the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Parry—Fierce animosity of Marie de Medici—Velasco, Duque de Frias constable of Castile, visits France—Is fascinated by the gracious courtesies of Henri Quatre—Death of the duke de la Trimouille.

THE spring of the year 1604 brought grave anxieties and apprehensions to king Henry, and to his ministers. The bad offices and ill-will of the Spanish ministry beset them in every department of government, by intrigues political and domestic, by insinuations and by bribes, which in this venal age was a lure too seldom repudiated. The queen was unhappy and irritated; madame de Verneuil distant, irascible, and steadfast in her demands to be permitted to withdraw from the kingdom with her children. This indifference seemed but more fatally to enslave the misguided affection of the king; and nothing can be more ludicrous and undignified than the vacillation and weak concessions to which he resorted to subdue the rancour of the haughty woman, who in reality hated the position in which she found herself, and yet too dearly loved power to leave the court. Henriette, moreover, seems to have indulged the delusion that the king would eventually put away his Italian wife, under plea of pre-contract to herself. Aware, therefore, of the singular power which her waywardness exercised over the royal mind, madame de Verneuil, on the occasion of a mandate issued by queen Marie, forbidding ladies who visited la Marquise to pre-

sent themselves in *les petits appartements* of the Louvre, openly demanded her rights, or permission to leave France. In public she discarded the sumptuous array for which she was renowned; she frequented the churches and confessionals of the capital. She openly bewailed the sin of her past life, the guilt of which she ascribed to the falsehood of the king; and, finally, she convened at the hôtel de Soissons a council of ecclesiastics, to discuss the terms of the promise of marriage given to her by Henry, with a view of forwarding a memorial to Rome, and to the principal courts of Europe, praying that her title to be considered as the consort of king Henry might be acknowledged. Henriette also diligently commenced the study of the Spanish language; and took into her service as chief tirewoman a Spanish lady, recommended, it was reported, by the queen of Spain. With her kindred in England, also, she carried on active intercourse: it was supposed that the duke of Lenox and his brother, won by her beauty and capacity, advocated her cause in the presence of king James; and had even enlisted the sympathy of Anne of Denmark. At this period that princess seems to have been highly unpopular with king Henry; who in a despatch alludes to her Britannic majesty as, *une femme pleine de malignité*. The legitimacy of Marie's "little dauphin" was menaced at this period more than is generally supposed. The court of Spain was the abettor and partisan of her

rival; while the goodwill of that of England seems to have been doubtful. In the king Marie had no refuge—Henry was infatuated with his mistress; and oftentimes gravely alienated from herself. A coldness subsisted between the grand-duke of Tuscany and his majesty; while the queen's violent conduct respecting Giovannini had caused a suspension of correspondence between Marie and her uncle. The queen in reality, therefore, had abundant cause for grief and apprehension; and well might she reproach the consort who so culpably permitted her rights, and those of her son to be thus arraigned! To endure with meekness the undoubted wrongs which were inflicted on her honour as a wife and a mother; and to act with judgment amid aggressions so overt, required high and disciplined endowments, the which, neither nature nor education had conferred on Marie de Medici. The scandal of madame de Verneuil's conduct at length induced both Villeroy and Rosny to advise the king to demand back the promise of marriage upon which so many dangerous intrigues were based. Henry accordingly broached the subject at a parting interview with Henriette before his departure from Paris to Fontainebleau, where, as has been related, he left the queen to profit by the sage counsel of Rosny. Madame de Verneuil flew into a transport of rage, and replied, "that if his majesty wished for the return of the document he might find it!" Henry then informed Henriette, that he was aware of the treasonable nature of the intrigues

carried on by her kindred with the Spanish court; that already proofs of such treason were before the council; and that the restoration of the document could alone earn a suppression of such evidence, and save her father and brother from arrest. "It is impossible that I can see your majesty again—you, sire, are becoming suspicious, vindictive, and jealous! It is my earnest desire to put an end to an intimacy from which no advantage results to myself or to my children, though we have the very positive evil of public disgrace and reprehension!" was the retort given to the royal expostulation. She then commenced an attack on the conduct of the queen; and applied an epithet to her majesty which so exasperated the king, that, as he afterwards confessed to Rosny, he with difficulty refrained from "slapping her on the face." His majesty, however, chose the more dignified course of rising and leaving the apartment; vowing to compel the return of the promise, and to cause la Marquise to rue the insolence of her defiance. On arriving at Fontainebleau, Henry confided his griefs to his faithful Rosny, and commanded him to wait upon Madame de Verneuil, and signify his will that the document of which such treasonable use had been made should be surrendered; also, that she should retire to Verneuil, while necessary arrangements were made for her exile from the kingdom, in accordance with her own frequent solicitations. La Marquise in the interval, reflecting that her plans were not matured, and that she had not yet obtained surety of refuge at either of the courts of

London or Madrid, repented of her rashness, and despatched M. de Sigognes with a humble letter of apology to the king. She, however, insidiously dwelt only on the inconsiderate disrespect shown by herself at their late interview to his royal majesty; never alluding to the wounds inflicted on Henry's susceptible spirit by her disdainful taunts. "Madame," replied the king, "if your actions tallied with your words, I should have less reason for dissatisfaction. Your letters speak of your respectful attachment; your actions imply gross ingratitude. For five years and more you have continued this conduct, at which every one wonders. Judge, therefore, what must be my own opinion of such proceedings. It may be convenient to you that the world should imagine that you possess my affection; but it is a shame to me to permit it to appear that you rebel, and despise me. Therefore is it, that when you write I now often pay you back by silence: nevertheless, if you choose to change your conduct, I am ready to become yours more than ever."<sup>1</sup>

M. de Sigognes also took to Paris a second letter to Rosny, in which king Henry reiterated his previous commands.<sup>2</sup> Rosny began now to have hopes of his hero—and permitted himself to speculate

<sup>1</sup> A la Marquise de Verneuil, MS. Collection de la reine Marie Amelie.—Lettres Missives, t. 6. Berger de Xivrey. Sully, Mem., liv. 20ème.

<sup>2</sup> In another letter to Rosny, Henry says, respecting Madame de Verneuil and her semi-devotion to himself—  
"Mais en un mot, *aut Cesar, aut nihil.*"

on the happy concord likely to reign at the Louvre, after the exit from the kingdom of madame de Verneuil. Henriette, though she had found it expedient for the moment to conciliate the king, still thirsted for freedom. That "wild, fierce, but fascinating spirit" panted for vengeance; the first step to which, was to obtain permission to leave the realm with her son. About this time Henriette was initiated into the secret object of the interviews between her father and brother, and the Spanish ambassador. At her subsequent trial, however, madame de Verneuil denied knowledge of the political overtures made by her kindred; and took oath that she believed the conferences were holden with a view to provide her with a retreat in Madrid. Her statement, however, was generally disbelieved, and on reasonable grounds. The intimacy between la Marquise and her brother, M. d'Auvergne, was far too intimate; and their relative capacities too unfairly balanced, to render it probable that the count was likely to deceive, or to withhold an important secret concerning herself from madame de Verneuil. At the same time that she sought reconciliation with the king, Henriette despatched a hasty note to her brother, exhorting M. d'Auvergne to hasten his measures to provide her with a foreign refuge; as her position, from the frequent illnesses of the king, became more precarious and unbearable; and warning him to be on his guard against the opposition and vigilance of their mother, madame d'Entragues. "I imagine that you have felt as much astonishment as

I have done at the daily furies of our mother; who seems to have some inkling of our designs, from the stabs which she is in the habit of inflicting on M. d'Entragues. I pray you, cease to be diverted by the cajolery and witcheries of the world; time is stealing from us, which it may be no longer in our power to retrieve. We must secure a sure and permanent refuge—this is the one and sole aspiration of my life. If you are what I deem you to be, you will never cease until you obtain for me this boon—your interest is bound up in mine—and I am compelled to contemplate this step, principally because *his* health appears to indicate such a necessity.” This note fell into the hands of Rosny, and naturally greatly excited his suspicion, after its perusal by M. d'Anvergne, who was proverbially careless in disposing of important papers intrusted to him.

Meanwhile, Rosny reluctantly proceeded on his mission to the hôtel de Soissons. “Instead of being humble, and avowing the injury which she had inflicted on the king, madame de Vernueil took so high a tone that I believed a permanent rupture must ensue. She refused to give the king the satisfaction which he demanded; and, moreover, seemed so resolved to put an end to all intercourse between his majesty and herself, that she prayed me in vehement language to bring about this result, and to help her in such design.”<sup>1</sup> Rosny, in his most winning manner, promised compliance; and the two together concocted an epistle to the king, in which Henriette empowered the former to

<sup>1</sup> *Economies Royales*, p. 347 (1604).



communicate her resolutions. The draft of the letter was carried home by Rosny, who executed a copy in his own hand of a document which he fondly believed might restore peace to the court. Before he despatched such a document, the wily minister thought it prudent to send it again for the perusal of madame de Verneuil. He directed his messenger to refuse a verbal message of approval; but to request a few lines from the hand of la Marquise, the which Rosny resolved to keep as a satisfactory proof to his royal master—in case Henriette thought fit to deny the contents of the letter—that she had in reality authorised its despatch: and well Rosny found himself from this caution. In this letter madame de Verneuil, through M. de Rosny, formally petitioned to be permitted to withdraw from the French court; she asked that the king would still hold her in friendly remembrance; and visit her occasionally, though not in private. Madame de Verneuil wrote her approval of this communication, making only one verbal alteration, apparently of little moment. “I carefully put aside this new letter,” writes M. de Rosny, “and I despatched mine to the king, hoping that his majesty, after its perusal, would be weary of the capricious dictation of this woman.” Henry was at first violently incensed.<sup>1</sup> “She wishes to leave the realm! Well, so be it—she shall be caught in the net of her own weaving!” The following day the king arrived in Paris, ostensibly to preside at a

<sup>1</sup> *Œconomies Royales*, edit. orig. Mem. de Sully, liv. 18ème.

council of ministers, but in reality to visit la Marquise, and to try to win her from her purpose. The grief and the shame felt by Rosny were intense : every previous resolve was forgotten by Henry, under the fascinations of Henriette ; the king denied his anger, disowned his agents, and promised to impose silence on the “great personage” who clamoured that the written promise of marriage should be restored. Entreaties and threats were next resorted to by the king to compel the acquiescence of madame de Verneuil, who still persisted in her haughty and ungracious demeanour. His majesty then refused to make any pecuniary settlement on Henriette if she quitted France ; and absolutely declined to allow her children to accompany her. Compelled to dissimulate, though now encouraged by the weakness of the king to imagine any flight of ambition possible, madame de Verneuil the same night quitted Paris, and retired to her father’s château of Marcoussy ; and declined to see his majesty, until he was prepared to acknowledge “her rights.” It is lamentable to record the follies and aberrations of the king in this affair—follies so egregious, that they might have resulted in the overthrow of his dynasty, but for the fortunate discovery of the plot maturing for the proclamation of the illegitimacy of the dauphin. The position of queen Marie enlists the strongest compassion ; and in the pending *imbroglio* even Rosny congratulated himself that they were spared one element of discord, by the affectionate submission of Marguerite de Valois, Henry’s divorced wife, who from her fortress-palace of Usson

watched the events of the court with sympathy and dismay.

It is believed that king Henry received the first authentic intimation of the treason of the Balzac family from king James, in a private missive sent direct from London. The relations constantly maintained by the count d'Auvergne with Spain had been connived at by Henry, who credulously affirmed "that the correspondence was carried on for the benefit of the realm;" so that by thus sanctioning a gross betrayal of faith, the king found himself betrayed. Many letters are extant addressed at this period by Henry to M. d'Auvergne, exhorting him to persevere in his treacherous scheme—of worming out the secrets of the Madrid Cabinet to impart them to that of France. Needing, therefore, no excuse for the frequent interchange of missives with the Spanish ambassador in London, Taxis—or with Zuniga in Paris—M. d'Auvergne had leisure and opportunity to negotiate a private treaty. In that document the rights of Madame de Verneuil were distinctly recognised by Philip III.; and her son, Henri de Bourbon, was alluded to as dauphin of France, and legitimate heir of the throne! Asylum was offered to Madame Henriette in Madrid; where one of the royal palaces was to be assigned for her abode. Sully, too, insinuates that an additional article recognised M. d'Auvergne himself, a son of Charles IX., as next in succession to his nephew! Several of the principal nobles of France were named to his catholic majesty, including M. de Montmorency, as

personages likely to be favourable to a new settlement of the crown. The pecuniary part of this compact was still under discussion, when Henry received a notification from king James, and a proof of the reality of the conspiracy by the transmission of a letter addressed by M. de Maignelais to a Jesuit monk settled in England; and which had been seized and confiscated by the English council. A copy of the famous promise *de matrimonio in futurum* had been shown to James by the duke of Lenox. His majesty replied "that, although madame la Marquise had some reason for her outcry, yet that he did not intend to meddle in the affair." James then forbade Lenox to tamper in support of his cousin's rights; and apparently laid the same injunction on his sprightly consort, queen Anne. It was affirmed that Henriette was innocent of treasonable intents; and that she was purposely deceived by d'Auvergne and by her father, who kept her in ignorance of the true nature of their conferences with Morgan, through whose agency they communicated with Zuniga. The agent employed by MM. d'Entraques to carry missives into Spain was M. de Chevillard, a relative of the family. M. d'Auvergne, meantime, received mysterious intimation that a link in their subtle scheme had broken: it is supposed that Madame d'Entraques his mother, was his informant, and that she wisely counselled him to escape from Paris, and wait events. A quarrel was soon picked with that irascible personage, M. de Soissons, on a matter of precedence, which served as a pretext

for the departure of d'Auvergne from Paris; and which event completely opened the eyes of Henry's ministers to the gravity of the crisis. No time was lost in debate; the king seemed beside himself with fury; and in his transports vowed that the criminals should expiate their treason on the scaffold, not excepting madame Henriette herself. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Thomas Morgan and of an individual named Fortan, employed by madame de Verneuil to teach her the Spanish language, and who resided at her hôtel. The P. Archange, a Capuchin friar, and confessor to madame Henriette, was also placed under *surveillance* in his monastery. The principal culprits, fortunately for themselves, were absent, and at large:<sup>1</sup> M. d'Auvergne had taken refuge at Vic, a desolate and dreary château in the wilds of Auvergne; and M. d'Entragues and his daughter were at Marcoussy, a fortified castle, over the drawbridge of which no person was admitted. Henry, meantime, wrote to his ambassador in London, M. de Beaumont; the perplexity of his mind and his unwillingness to ascribe the odium of so black a treason to his mistress and her relatives is painfully visible. His infatuation, when the first burst of indignation was over at machinations so perilous, still inclined him to hide the guilt of the persons accused; and, if possible, to shield them from public arraignment. "I have caused one, Thomas

<sup>1</sup> Sully, Mem., liv. 18ème. Siri Mem. Recond., vol. i. Dupleix—Hist. de France. Vie d'Henriette de Balzac. Dreux du Radier. De Thou, Hist. de son Temps, liv. 132.

Morgan, to be arrested, and sent to the Bastille for treasonable intrigues, of which I have such positive proofs, that not only can I not doubt, but I am bound to punish so mischievous a traitor. He was formerly arrested by the late king at the suit of the deceased queen-mother, for delinquencies connected with the League; but I have reason to believe that it was then with the knowledge of the English ambassador that he frequented with the Spaniards. This said Morgan has now been intriguing between the count d'Auvergne and M. d'Entragues, and the said Spaniards. I have ascertained already from these last-mentioned personages that Taxis, and the last ambassador (Zuniga) sent hither, assured them that the king of Spain was willing to protect and favour them, under pretext of serving the marquise de Verneuil, and my children by that lady."<sup>1</sup> Henry proceeds to discuss the facts in a strain of affected indifference; and states that he has been informed that the duke of Lenox was a party in the conspiracy.

Henry, meantime, sent M. d'Escures to the count d'Auvergne, to warn the latter that his practices were discovered; and to exhort him to confess the details of the plot, and to implore the royal clemency. The tender treatment experienced by M. d'Auvergne seems rather to have hardened his conscience than to have converted him into the zealous servant of so indulgent a master. Henry always

<sup>1</sup> Henri IV. a M. de Beaumont, son ambassadeur en Angleterre, MS. de Brienne 40, fol. 208. Bèth 8996, fol. 121. Lettres Missives, t. 6.



remembered the promise exacted from him by his predecessors Charles IX. and Henry III., on the deathbed of each of these monarchs, to show favour and indulgence to the count. The presence of M. d'Escures, nevertheless, was that of a messenger not likely to reassure: he had been intrusted with a similar errand towards the marshal de Biron; and his persuasions had resulted in a fatal issue as regarded the latter. M. d'Auvergne lived in constant fever and anxiety. The rambling old château which sheltered him stood on a bleak plain encircled by mountains; it was partially unfurnished, and fast falling into ruin. Whenever its master stirred abroad, valets were stationed on the highest points in the vicinity, who on the approach of any stranger sounded horns, and rang huge bells. M. d'Auvergne, thereupon, if in the neighbourhood, retreated to his refuge, and prepared for the unwelcome intrusion. This miserable life was in itself severe castigation to a prince of Auvergne's luxurious and sociable temperament. M. d'Escures was consequently received with indifferent welcome. D'Auvergne listened, despised the clemency which proffered itself unsought, and devised fresh stratagems to deceive his majesty. The arrest of Morgan he learned by a letter written by his consort, which was delivered to him by d'Escures. Madame d'Auvergne had taken refuge with her father the constable, at Chantilly. She informed her husband of the untoward aspect of affairs, the anger of the king, and the rumoured resolve taken by the privy-council to arrest all the members of the



Balzac family. This intimation made the coward heart of d'Auvergne quail; he remembered his former incarceration in the Bastille, and shrank from again incurring the same ordeal. The working of the features of M. d'Auvergne, while perusing his letter, showed that he was thereby greatly discomposed. "Monseigneur, the prisoner Morgan has already inculcated many noble personages: if you have had intelligences with this said prisoner, I warn you to ease your conscience, and to appeal to the royal clemency. Believe, monseigneur, that the king already knows enough to render this overture on your part politic as well as necessary. If M. le maréchal de Biron had acted on the counsel which I gave him, he would have obtained forgiveness!" M. d'Auvergne, thereupon, fell into a fit of musing; but after an interval rose from his chair, exclaiming, "that he was resolved to make a clean breast of it, and exhort his kindred of Balzac to pacify the king by a voluntary surrender of the promise given to madame de Verneuil." This concession was not likely to offer impediment to the progress of his treasonable negotiations; it was intended by M. d'Auvergne, in his subtlety, to throw dust into the royal eyes; and to ward from the accused persons the retribution of their crime, until madame de Verneuil and her son had escaped from the realm. M. d'Auvergne, therefore, promised to accompany d'Escures back to Paris, and to give his majesty every satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> The trial of Morgan, mean-

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 18ème. Mathieu, Hist. du Regne de Henri IV. Vit. Siri, t. 1—Mem. Recond.

while, was commenced by command of the king; and the culprit was removed from the fortress of Vincennes to the Bastille. Proof positive of the guilty intercourse of MM. d'Entragues and d'Auvergne with the ambassadors Zuniga and Taxis was laid before the High Court. Unfortunately, the ministers, respecting the visible reluctance exhibited by the king to push the affair to extremity, acquiesced in the compromise suggested by his majesty. Henry proposed that, on condition of the return of the original document, promising marriage to Henriette de Balzac, further investigations should be suspended as to the criminality of M. d'Entragues. As for M. d'Auvergne, the king, on receiving a full avowal from the count's lips of his treasonable practices, consented to grant pardon for the crime, on condition that he submitted to an exile of three years from the realm. The queen, moreover, thankful to procure the abrogation of the fatal promise on any condition, declared herself content with the proposal.<sup>1</sup>

Madame de Verneuil, meantime, haughtily disavowed knowledge of the intrigue; and threw the blame of the proceeding on her brother, M. d'Auvergne. When this fact came to the knowledge of the count, he delivered up to Rosny all the letters addressed to him during the past year by his sister;

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 132. *Économies Royales*, t. 1, ch. 92. Sauval, *Galanteries des Rois de France*. Vie de Henriette de Balzac. Dreux du Radier. *Journal de Henri IV.*, ann. 1604.

and displayed much vindictive feeling. Henriette, however, had been guarded in her communications, and had confined herself to aspirations for prompt departure from France, “where she considered her life to be endangered by the furies of *la Florentine*.” Her attitude was altogether so unbending, and her conviction of her wrongs so intense, while she firmly reiterated her demand for permission to leave France, that the king became almost frantic with grief and indecision. In vain he commanded la Marquise to grant him an interview at Verneuil or Malesherbes; in vain he requested written explanations. Madame de Verneuil was inexorable; while her letters were written in a style so witty and *piquant* as to insure their perusal and reperusal by his majesty. M. d’Entragues, meantime, assumed the attitude of humble injury—and declared that the king had no servants more faithful than the members of the family of Balzac. The High Court, nevertheless, after perusing the documents submitted as evidence against Morgan, petitioned his majesty to annul and destroy a certain document, promising marriage to a lady of the Balzac family, as invalid from the first by the laws of the realm, and treasured unlawfully for the promotion of practices against the state. Application was thereupon made to M. d’Entragues by Villeroy—who proposed the alternative of submission, or the Bastille. After this judicial summons, it seems incredible that Henry should have condescended to negotiate on the subject with persons thus cited to obey a mandate of the highest court of the realm:

nevertheless, conditions were actually demanded from his majesty, and secretly conceded. Madame de Verneuil consented to give up the important slip of parchment—of which several copies existed duly attested by oath and signature—on condition that she was allowed to leave the realm, and take up her abode in England; that all the pecuniary gifts of the king should be confirmed, with the additional donation of a further sum of 20,000 gold crowns; and the promise of the first vacant bâton of marshal of France for her father!<sup>1</sup> This private arrangement effected, the secretary of the king M. de Loménie, was deputed to Marcoussy—without previous notice of his journey—to receive the document; as M. d'Entragues confessed that it was guarded there in his possession. Loménie entered the castle without opposition. D'Entragues gave grave but courteous reception to the royal envoy; and on learning his errand, conducted him to the chamber in which the paper was treasured. The document was found wrapped in cotton wool, and deposited in a bottle, which was again enclosed in another bottle, sealed with the arms of Entragues and Auvergne. The whole was enclosed in a small iron coffer, which was walled up in a niche behind the bed occupied by M. d'Entragues.<sup>2</sup> M. d'Entragues then signed a paper attesting on oath that the paper he had delivered to Loménie was the veritable document given by king Henry to Hen-

<sup>1</sup> *Eloge de la Maison de Balzac Entragues.*—Le Laboureur, sur Castelnau, t. 2, in fol.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* De Thou, liv. 132.

riette de Balzac. Loménie then returned in triumph to Paris, and presented the document, with the act of its attestation to the king, in the presence of the duke de Montpensier, the count de Soissons, the chancellor Sillery, the attorney-general de Guesle, the president Jeannin, and the secretaries of state, de Villeroy and de Gesvres. These personages drew up and signed an act testifying to the return of the document ; and stating that in their presence the paper had been consumed by fire—which act, with the attestation of M. d'Entragues, was deposited amid the secret archives of the realm.<sup>1</sup>

The return of this obstinately treasured paper seemed to restore joy and hilarity to the court. The queen emerged from the solitude in which she had perversely remained, pending the discussion for its restoration. Marie, during the interval, refused to see the king in private; and often permitted his majesty to stand at the door of her cabinet, expostulating, and pleading for admittance. Madame Concini, on one occasion, fearing the royal wrath, privately sent to request the presence of Rosny, as she owned herself to be utterly bewildered by the orders and counter orders which she received from the royal pair. New life and hope, however, appeared now to be infused into the heart of Marie by the destruction of the written promise given to la Verneuil; and by the humiliation and approaching departure of her rival. Magnificent fêtes for an interval enlivened the court; and the king expressed himself satisfied with the good humour and

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 18ème. Journal de Henri IV., ann. 1604.

cordiality of his consort. The little dauphin seemed now to absorb the notice of both his royal parents. The prince had nearly completed his third year, and was considered a precocious but unusually grave child, who showed little inclination for play. One evening, a year subsequently, the child seemed so overpowered with sleep, that Madame de Montglât took him on her knee and undressed him, dispensing for that evening with the usual attendance, and especially with that of the chaplain, who was always present to hear Monseigneur say his prayers. In a few hours Louis awoke, and finding himself in bed, burst into a fit of tears, and angrily reproached those around with having consigned him to sleep before he had repeated his prayers. The little madame Elizabeth was likewise a promising child, delicate in feature and health. The three children of Gabrielle d'Estrées were also included in the nursery establishment of St. Germain, to the displeasure of Marie; who perseveringly refused to bestow upon them the slightest notice, César-Monsieur excepted; whom, with strange caprice, she had taken into favour on her arrival in France. The children were admirably trained by Madame de Montglât; who maintained constant correspondence with their majesties, on the health and education of her charges.

The proceedings, meanwhile, of M. d'Entragues and his family were watched with vigilance by Rosny. M. d'Auvergne continued to talk of setting out for the court, but never actually put such

resolve into execution. Immediately after M. d'Escures took leave of the count, and after the latter was apprised of the return by his sister of the promise *de matrimonio in futurum*, M. d'Auvergne addressed a humble letter to the king, praying his majesty to excuse him from leaving the realm for the stipulated term of three years; and making many protestations of future loyal obedience. Simultaneously, however, he despatched one M. Iverné, into Spain, with letters addressed to Philip III., and to the duke de Lerma; but secretly as M. d'Auvergne believed that he had made this perfidious communication, it was detected by the bishop of Montpellier, who sent due intimation thereof to his majesty through the duke de Ventadour. The count, meantime, pretended to be carrying on an active correspondence with Spain, through one M. de Rochette, for his majesty's service; which letters—subsequently discovered to be forged—he diligently transmitted to the Louvre. It was also ascertained that he had communicated with M. d'Entragues at Marcoussy; but against his sister, Madame de Verneuil, the count exhibited the greatest animosity.

After the return of the famous promise, Henriette retired to her château de Verneuil, where she held little communication with the outward world, and announced that she was busied in making preparation for leaving France. Meanwhile, the nature of the correspondence which Auvergne carried on through M. de Rochette was privately investigated by M. de Loménie, who, by a bribe



and a promise of promotion, induced Rochette to give up a packet which he was conveying to the Spanish ambassador in Paris. The revelations thus obtained created great sensation; though, from the susceptibility of the king, many of the facts were subsequently deposed to, and not authenticated by the production of the intercepted documents, which were destroyed by the king's own hand. Recent discoveries had simply arrested the measures of the subtle schemers; but had not diverted them from their treasonable purpose. Fresh articles had been added to the treaty with Spain; which was still in process of negotiation by Chevillard. It was deposed that the outline of a plot to assassinate the king was disclosed by the documents captured. Henry was to be lured by Madame de Verneuil to her château; when on the road to Verneuil, assassins were to slay his majesty. The murder accomplished, retreat for Madame de Verneuil and for her son was provided in the adjacent territory of Artois; where the archduke Albert engaged to station a military force powerful enough to protect their flight to Brussels. M. d'Auvergne was then to assume the command in chief in the name of the dauphin Henry, son of Henriette!<sup>1</sup> Philip III. covenanted to provide the sum of

<sup>1</sup> Notes sur les Lettres du Cardinal d'Ossat.—Amelot de la Houssaye. This author asserts that Chevillard was the grandfather of his mother Madame de la Houssaye, from whom he received his information, together with a fac-simile of the treaty of the Balzac family with Spain. De Thou, liv. 132. Siri, Mem. Recond., t. 1, p. 297 et seq.

500,000 gold crowns; and to march troops into the provinces of Languedoc and Guyenne. The Lyonnais was to be seized by Fuentes; while the duke of Savoy undertook to invade Provence. The queen was to be placed under close arrest; and her mildest fate, to be eventually escorted to the frontier, and dismissed the realm. The design of the conspirators relative to the young dauphin Louis, did not clearly appear; but the allusions thereto were capable of a sanguinary construction. The treaty was of formidable import: — but d'Auvergne, the chieftain chosen to inaugurate the perfidy, was weak, incompetent, and unstable as the wind. In very wantonness of frivolity and mischief, he seems to have carried on this negotiation; for the doubt arises whether it was ever meant to attempt machinations so diabolical. The attitude of M. d'Entragues was subordinate; he seems to have consented to the plot, and to have received and treasured the documents authenticated by the signature of his Catholic majesty in the mysterious hiding places of Marcoussy. The innocence of Madame de Verneuil, subsequently so strongly insisted upon, is however open to doubt: she was a woman of fierce passions, provoked to frenzy by disappointed ambition; and fired by the weakness of the king to attempt any desperate enterprise. Whether she in reality entered into a dark conspiracy to assassinate the king, is a point which was never satisfactorily elucidated. Siri and other historians acquit Henriette of this crime; but assert that the deed was to be accomplished through

the agency of her young and beautiful sister Marie de Balzac, whose charms, it was reported, had made impression on the heart of the king. The existence of such a conspiracy, even on paper, occasioned strange misgivings and consternation in the council-chamber of the Louvre. Henry alone seemed apathetic, and reluctant to meet the crisis; and nearly distracted Rosny by his weak wailings and apologies for his unworthy mistress, whose taunting refusals either to return to Paris, or to grant an interview to his majesty, alone finally goaded Henry to take the steps absolutely requisite for the safety of the realm, and of his wife and son. The first necessary measure was the arrest of M. d'Auvergne; and to accomplish this act before the persons accused became aware that the council was in possession of fresh information. Rosny undertook the conduct of the enterprise, to which Henry made no objection; as even his clemency was wearied by the perfidious ingratitude of that personage.

D'Escures was therefore sent, for the second time, to confer with the count, and to exhort him to return to Paris. As Rosny believed that no persuasions would induce Auvergne to leave his retreat, a personage named Murat, accountant of a district in Auvergne, well known to the count, and with whom he had pecuniary dealings, was summoned to the Arsenal. Murat was a man of courage and nerve, and ready to serve the government with fidelity. To this agent Rosny confided his perplexity, and the desire of the king to effect

the arrest of M. d'Auvergne privately ; so that none of the accused might escape, or have opportunity to destroy documents which might betray the aim of the conspiracy. Murat, thereupon, offered to accomplish the arrest by stratagem should the persuasions of d'Escures fail ; he observed that the count, having pecuniary transactions with himself and his brother, no suspicion would be excited in the mind of M. d'Auvergne by his visit. A warrant under the great seal was delivered to Murat ; also blank letters signed by the king, which he was empowered to fill up as necessity dictated, calling upon his majesty's distant officers and servants to aid and assist the enterprise.

The fears of M. d'Auvergne, meantime, assumed a vividness which demonstrated how utterly incapable he was of conduct and presence of mind. Henry had not much to dread from the machinations of a conspirator whose secret, while yet immature, weighed so heavily as to drive him to the verge of insanity. By night and by day M. d'Auvergne roamed over his dreary château, apprehensive of plots for his arrest ; his guilty conscience boding all manner of perils. Whenever he stirred abroad he was followed by two fierce hounds ; while emissaries scoured the country for miles to report, and warn their master of the appearance of any stranger in the neighbourhood. In the town of Clermont, close at hand, M. d'Auvergne had long visited one madame de Château-Gay—the wife of the town-clerk. His fears were now so intense that he no longer dared to present himself at the house of

this lady. Their trysting-place, therefore, was on a wide and stony plain, where at midnight the lady repaired. So distrustful, however, did d'Auvergne become, that la Château-Gay was followed by his spies from her residence in Clermont to the spot where they were to meet. There the lady submitted to be blindfolded, and conducted to some cavern or forest hut chosen by d'Auvergne as their place of conference. If, as it sometimes happened, she appeared attended by servants, she was suffered to shiver in the blast, and return without having obtained audience of her royal admirer. Throughout these agitations M. d'Auvergne pertinaciously continued his plotting through la Rochette, who first treacherously communicated his missives to Loménie, before delivering them to Zuniga, to whom they were principally addressed. M. Murat, meantime, arrived at Vic; and, after much trouble, obtained an interview with M. d'Auvergne, to arrange, as he hinted, for the speedy settlement of the pecuniary matters between them. This business disposed of, Auvergne began to speak of the court and of its dominant influences, and said, "that M. Murat must have heard of the late *imbroglio*, and how he had been solicited to return to court—a thing he had resolved never to do, as he would rather depart for foreign lands than incur a chance of being treated as M. de Biron was, to assuage the jealousies and suspicions of the king." He then boastfully alluded to the security of his abode at Vic; and declared "that the minister dared not effect his open arrest; but that his ma-

jesty had been glad to compound the affair to gain possession of the promise he had given to madame Henriette." Murat gravely replied, "that he thought M. d'Auvergne was mistaken in the course he had adopted; that the king was clement, and never violated his word; nevertheless, it was true that the conscience of M. d'Auvergne was his most trusty counsellor." Auvergne replied, "that he did not choose to risk his liberty, or to be made the scapegoat of others. That he was hated by the king, the queen, and the princes; that M. le Grand (duc de Bellegarde) was his mortal enemy, and, therefore, that there was no one to speak for him to the king; that madame Henriette had now taken him in hate, and that she was quite capable of making her peace with his majesty at his expense: moreover, that neither MM. de Villeroy, Rosny, nor Sillery had written to encourage him to make the venture, which he interpreted to be a sign of the unwillingness of these estimable personages to aid in the ruin of a prince of his quality." Murat remarked, "that the king was now pacified by the concession made by M. d'Entragues; and that he had even granted to the latter, it was said, a token of his favour; so that if nothing had since occurred to impeach the loyalty of M. d'Auvergne and his kindred, he apprehended little danger for the person of M. le Comte." Auvergne coloured; but rendered garrulous by apprehension and a guilty conscience, he rejoined, "that madame his consort said nothing concerning his return to court; neither, he believed, did his father-in-law, M. le Connétable,

deem it expedient—at any rate, not until after the release of Morgan, who was still a prisoner in the Bastille. In short, nothing should induce him to leave the château de Vic—not even the plausible persuasions of M. de Vitry, who, he was informed, was about to visit the province.” Notwithstanding the apparent stoutness of these declarations, nothing could be more vacillating than the conduct of M. d’Auvergne. He never persisted in the same intent for an hour; but continued to devise schemes, which he abandoned as soon as discussed. Though he suspected Murat and d’Escures, he never seemed easy but when in their society; then suddenly he took panic, and secretly departed for a distant château; but returned to Vic, before the royal agents had had leisure to recover from their dismay at his flight. He wrote to Rosny to protest that his devotion to his majesty had never glowed with greater loyalty—and to ask the advice of the potent minister. The only real measure of safety—a speedy retreat from the realm—seems never to have flashed across the ill-balanced mind of this prince.<sup>1</sup>

Meantime, tidings of fresh *tracasseries* were forwarded by M. de Beaumont from London. The

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 18ème. “Messieurs!” audaciously exclaimed M. d’Auvergne to his visitors, “Messieurs, montrez-moi une ligne d’écriture, par laquelle on puisse me convaincre d’avoir traité avec le roy d’Espagne ou son ambassadeur, et je vais signer en dessous mon arrêt de mort, et me condamner moi-même à être écartelé vif.” Amelot de la Houssaye.



ambassador de Taxis was there known to be in frequent communication with the duke of Lenox and his mother, the sister of M. d'Entragues; and, although king James was supposed to discountenance so malignant an intrigue, yet the ambassador indignantly commented on the scandal of permitting the legality of queen Marie's marriage, and consequently the legitimacy of the dauphin, to be a subject of discussion at a foreign court. Orders were thereupon forwarded to Murat, forthwith to effect the arrest of d'Auvergne; while a privy-council mandate, addressed to madame de Verneuil, commanded the removal of her young son from her custody to St. Germain. With unequalled audacity, Henriette refused to submit to the decree: in language of insulting reproach she taunted his majesty for his cruel disregard of her wishes; and demanded the royal licence to depart for Brussels. The young prince was, nevertheless, forcibly removed from Verneuil and conveyed to St. Germain—and this unexpected severity might have warned Henriette that her arrogance had surpassed the limits even of royal forbearance. Henry was now in reality exasperated; but the disdain of his mistress, with whom he was still madly infatuated, and a resolve to bring her at any cost to his feet, seems to have had more influence in dictating the subsequent measures than the tears and fury of Marie de Medici; or the counsels of his most trusted ministers. As a last overture, Henry sent M. de Sigognes to Verneuil to offer Madame la Marquise, on her submission, the château de Caen

as a refuge from the vengeance of the queen ; the which, it was said, that she so greatly apprehended. Henriette rejected the proposal, unless his majesty would restore her son, and permit her to exercise sovereign rights in the city, with powers to nominate the governor of Caen ! Every expedient being exhausted, Henry gave his ministers permission to proceed with what Rosny contemptuously designates, as far as it regarded Madame de Verneuil, *une intrigue d'amour déguisée en affaire d'état*.

The arrest of the count d'Auvergne was effected in the following manner :—It happened that a review of the regiment of light horse, of which M. de Vendôme was colonel, was to be holden in the vicinity of Clermont. The officer in command was M. d'Eures, a zealous servant of the king. To this officer, therefore, Murat and d'Escures communicated the orders which they had received ; and summoned d'Eures, to aid in effecting the arrest. As the royal mandate was precise, d'Eures at once entered into the affair, and, in fact, assumed its conduct. He, therefore, waited upon M. d'Auvergne, and requested him to review the regiment in his high capacity, as colonel-general of light cavalry ; adding that, as M. le Comte was on the eve of departure for Fontainebleau, he could report the condition of the troops to his majesty. M. d'Auvergne fell into the snare, and fixed the 9th day of November for the review. Meantime, d'Eures communicated with M. de Nerestan, an officer of the neighbouring garrison of Riom, and directed him to appear on the ground with a

company of picked men for special service. On the given day the count rode to the field, mounted on a fleet horse, repenting his appointment, and intending, if the troops were not on the field, to retire immediately back to Vic. D'Eures, however, proved a better tactician: the light horse of M. de Vendôme were drawn up in array, and were, moreover, reinforced by a company from Riom, under Nerestan. M. d'Auvergne, therefore, rode forwards fearlessly—the meadow was spacious and open, and could not harbour ambuscades. His highness was greeted respectfully by the two commanders—who dismounted to salute him. D'Auvergne replied with affability, casting, nevertheless, furtive glances around, and longing to give the rein to his fleet charger. MM. d'Eures and de Nerestan, then conducted the count between them towards the flagstaff of the regiment. Nerestan was attended by four footmen in livery, but who were in fact disguised soldiers. On a given signal, one of these men seized the head of the count's horse, other two clasped his legs, while M. d'Eures demanded his sword, and Nerestan arrested him in the king's name.<sup>1</sup> All was accomplished in the space of a few minutes. M. d'Auvergne was lifted from his horse, placed on a wretched hack, and, without a moment's delay, surrounded by the soldiers of Nerestan's company. He was conducted to Aigueperse, a town on the road to Paris. The count was so stunned by his sudden capture, that he remained speechless, and realised his position

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 18ème. De Thou, liv. 132.

only on his arrival at Aigueperse. He then asked permission to write to Madame de Château-Gay, to apprise her of his arrest. When the facts were made known to this lady, she seized a pistol, and with oaths protested that she would one day avenge the outrage inflicted on so royal a prince, by slaying MM. Murat and d'Escures. The count was transported the same night to Briare, from whence he proceeded the day following to Montargis; he was there made to enter a covered boat, to be conveyed up the river to the Bastille, where he was placed in the apartment occupied by the Marshal de Biron.<sup>1</sup> Tears fell from the eyes of the unfortunate prince as he surveyed that vaulted chamber, and recalled its sinister recollections. "M. de Ruigny mon ami," exclaimed he, "there is no hostility in Paris however mean, which I would not prefer to this stronghold of yours! I have done nothing to merit such a cruel and rigorous lot."<sup>2</sup> About the same time Chevillard was arrested at his house, and conveyed to the Bastille, where he arrived a few hours subsequently to his patron, the count. He firmly denied his participation in the crime; but confessed that pity for the youth, beauty, and peril of Henriette de Balzac had induced him to enter into the negotiation to procure

<sup>1</sup> Lettre du Roy a Rosny, *Œconomies Royales*, chap. 45.

<sup>2</sup> Another account states that the count, on his arrival at the Bastille, began to capricer, et sauter comme de coutume, and was rebuked in these words by Rosny's lieutenant: "Que ce n'étaient pas des figures de balets qu'on voulait jouer; qu'il était question en son fait d'autre chose!"

for her a refuge in Spain, after his majesty's demise. It is stated, however, that Chevillard, at the moment of his arrest, had upon his person the original of the treaty with Spain, which he was about to convey to the abode of Zuniga; the document having just received the signature of Madame la Marquise, who was therein invested with the guardianship of the future king—her son—during his minority; the regency of the realm having been conferred on M. d'Auvergne by the treacherous plotters. Chevillard, it is said, concealed the parchment in the skirt of his habit; and on arriving at the Bastille, it escaped detection during the search to which all prisoners were subjected. Every day subsequently Chevillard tore up a fragment, which he swallowed with his soup—and thus in a short period he destroyed the whole of the dangerous document.

Warrants were simultaneously issued for the arrest of the count d'Entragues and of his daughter madame de Verneuil. The parliament, on the representation of M. de Harlay first president, decreed that the criminals should be secretly apprehended, and conducted to the Conciergerie. The king now showed extraordinary eagerness for the arrest of his mistress and her father. M. d'Entragues was still at Marcoussy, a fortress which, if defence were attempted, it might take time to storm. Henry, therefore, sent for the grand provost M. Defunctis, and, in the presence of Villeroy and Rosny, his majesty commanded him to arrest the count. "I will give you ten cannons and five regi-

ments to assault his stronghold—only bring me M. d'Entragues," said his majesty. The provost replied, that means should be discovered to perform his majesty's will without the employment of military force; for that a siege of Marcoussy, if maintained only for a single day, would give time to the accused to destroy every evidence of guilt. "Well, M. Defunctis, have your way: I give you ten days for your capture; and meantime, secrecy shall be strictly maintained as to the object of your errand." The provost then retired from the presence, to concert a stratagem for gaining an entrance into the stronghold of M. d'Entragues. First, he despatched an archer to Marcoussy, who was instructed to personate a lame and invalid soldier; this man was directed to loiter about the village, and to notice the habits of the servants of the household of the castle. The grim old fortress was surrounded by a deep and wide moat, its two drawbridges being always raised; and apparently the members of the household seldom stirred beyond its precincts. M. d'Entragues was living alone, and was reported to be ill and melancholy, his wife being absent with her daughter at Verneuil. After a watch of some days, the spy discovered that on Fridays, and on fast-days, a plank was lowered across the moat, near to the entrance to the kitchens, to enable the cooks to take in supplies of eggs and butter from peasant women of the neighbouring hamlet of Jouey. This discovery sufficed for the projects of M. Defunctis: he repaired to Marcoussy with forty archers. Four of these men he disguised

as peasant women, and furnished them with baskets of eggs. The rest of his archers he posted in ambuscade in a wood, the boundary of the pleasure-grounds at the back of the château, and prepared for action. The enterprise was attempted on a Friday—the day following the arrest of Auvergne, and while the latter was on his way to the Bastille. At dawn the disguised soldiers posted themselves by the little bridge, the usual avenue for supplying the larder of M. le Comte. In due time a cook appeared, and, lowering the plank, commenced an eager bargain with the supposed market-women. Three pistols were presently levelled at his head, and he found himself seized and gagged by these formidable butter-women. This achieved, the grand provost and his archers crossed the plank, and penetrated into the courtyard of the château. They met the count's valet, who stared at the intruders, and took to flight. He was stopped, however, and brought back to the presence of the provost, who commanded him to lead the way to his master's chamber. Defunctis posted eight archers in the vestibule of the château, and four in the antechamber of M. d'Entragues' apartment; he then followed the valet to the *garde-robe*, and, with more patience than could have been anticipated, waited until the hour when the count usually awoke. At the first sound of d'Entrague's voice as he summoned his valet, the provost entered and drew back the curtains of the bed. M. d'Entragues started and turned pale; he then stammered forth an inquiry as to the errand of M. le Grand Prevôt? When shown the privy-council



warrant for his arrest on the charge of treason and conspiracy, the agitation of d'Entragues was intense ; he protested his innocence and that of la Marquise, his daughter ; and entreated that he might be permitted to send an express to Paris to implore the royal clemency. These expostulations availed little ; he was compelled to rise, attire himself, and prepare for his departure for the Conciergerie. Before leaving his chamber, d'Entragues requested permission to open a closet which was concealed behind the tapestry which draped the tester of his bed, to possess himself, as he said, of a paper—a bond for the sum of 20,000 crowns, which would fall due in a few days, and which he destined for the portion of his youngest daughter on her marriage with Bassompierre. Defunctis declined to permit the closet to be opened, without an order from the king ; and he forthwith placed seals on the door. “Monsieur, fate has placed in your hands the honour and salvation of our noble house. In that casket on yonder table there are jewels belonging to my daughter, worth 50,000 crowns—take them : but suffer me to rescue the paper I allude to ! ” exclaimed M. d'Entragues imploringly. This attempt at bribery did not of course increase the indulgence, or amenity of manner of the grand provost. The count was hurried to a coach and four waiting in the courtyard, which, being surrounded by Defunctis and his archers, took the road for the capital. The provost sent forwards an express to the king to ask instructions, especially concerning the contents of the mys-

terious closet, which it was suspected contained political papers of moment. Henry despatched directions authorising the provost to seize and bring away from Marcoussy all papers; to conduct his prisoner to the Conciergerie; and to arrest Madame d'Entragues, should she, meantime, have returned to Marcoussy. He was likewise directed to visit Malesherbes, and search the depositaries at that abode; if Madame la Comtesse was there, Defunctis was to commit her to the *surveillance* of a posse of his archers. The royal messenger met the grand provost and his prisoner about three leagues from Paris. On perusing the mandate, Defunctis demanded from M. d'Entragues his keys; and requested him to name a person in whom he had confidence to be present at the search he was, by royal order, about to institute. M. d'Entragues sat reclining back in the carriage, overwhelmed with despondency; but mentioned his secretary, Gantier, as a person whom he could trust. Defunctis then committed his prisoner to his lieutenant; and retraced his way back to Marcoussy.<sup>1</sup> The papers were speedily in the custody of Villeroy, who brought them to the king at his *lever* on the following morning. "This evening, M. d'Entragues was brought from his country house, seven or eight leagues hence, guarded by archers on horseback, and arrived in a coach and four horses at the Conciergerie:" writes the secretary of the English am-

<sup>1</sup> Arrest du Sieur d'Entragues par le Provost Defunctis—MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, vol. 661, fol. 91. Le Laboureur sur Castelnau, t. 2. Eloges des Balzac et Genealogies.

bassador, Sir Thomas Parry, in his "Journal of Events at the Court of France."<sup>1</sup> Another account states that M. de Marcoussy, son of M. d'Entragues, rode by the window of the coach, looking pale and aggrieved. Strict orders had been issued for the treatment of d'Entragues at the prison; no persons were to be admitted to confer with him, not even members of his family, without an order from the secretary, Villeroy: indeed, so severe had been the orders issued, that the unfortunate count was several hours before he could obtain either fire or light; the governor of the prison not daring to grant "these indulgences," without official authorisation.

Madame de Verneuil, meantime, unexpectedly arrived in Paris, about the period when the parliament had decreed secret *prise de corps* against her kindred. Her conduct was still haughty and defiant. She still refused to see the king, excusing herself on the plea, "that religion and solitude had opened her eyes to the sin of her past career." On the 12th of December, the day following the arrest of d'Entragues, the grand provost and his archers proceeded to the abode of la Marquise, Rue de Tournon Faubourg St. Germain, and signified her arrest for conspiracy against the state; and that she must prepare to remove during the course of the day to the Conciergerie. Henriette glanced at the royal warrant with incredulous amazement; a violent burst of passion succeeded, and she ex-

<sup>1</sup> MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X. The arrest was made December 11th, 1604.

claimed, "that she did not fear to die, on the contrary, she desired release from her earthly tribulations; nevertheless, it would be always said that the king had put his wife to death—for that she was the true and lawful queen, before la Florentine!" Sir Thomas Parry the English ambassador, despatched an express to his court to notify the astonishing event. The ambassador occupied the adjacent house, and therefore was almost a spectator of the facts, which he graphically describes in a letter addressed to Lord Cranbourn. "Morgan is just sent to the Conciergerie; the count d'Auvergne is appointed to be brought to the same place. *Prise de corps* has been granted against M. d'Entragues, and his daughter, la Marquise. She came to the town on Tuesday sen'night, to lodge at Faubourg St. Germain, in the house next adjoining to mine. Two days after, the grand provost, and the chevalier du Guet, attended by archers, were sent to arrest her. The warrant was executed very rigorously, removing from her all her servants, except one poor woman to attend on her, and taking into their hands all the keys of the doors. They keep continual watch and ward; no man may have access to speak to her but in presence of the chevalier du Guet, or his deputy. It was ordered by the court of parliament that she should be brought to the Conciergerie; and the order was likewise confirmed by the council. The chevalier du Guet advertising her of the charge he had received to bring her to that place, she began to weep and lament, and in the end fell to raging and tearing her hair;

whereof the council advertised upon their motion by the king, the execution of the order is stayed, and she remaineth yet at her home. D'Entragues, her father, was brought to the prison in a coach, with a great number of archers, and remitted prisoner to the Conciergerie ; his wife sought for, but not yet found." <sup>1</sup> M. de Sillery was sent by the king the same afternoon to notify to Henriette that for the present her prison should be her own house. "Scarcely could the king control his impatience," writes Rosny, "so anxious was he to reassure his mistress ; and to make her understand that pardon would be the guerdon of her submission to the conditions which it was his intention to prescribe." Recovered from the first surprise and fright of her arrest, Madame de Verneuil read the mind of the king—its pitiable subservience to her influence ; and his design, after humbling her pride, and punishing her late contumacy, to terrify her into submission. She therefore replied tearfully, but firmly, to the representations of Sillery ; disowned all knowledge or confederacy with M. d'Auvergne ; deplored the calamitous fate of her father, whose sole crime was that he loved her too faithfully ! Sillery, who was accompanied by the secretary of state, de Maisse, exhorted her to confess her guilt, as letters had been discovered under her own hand, which demonstrated her correspondence with Spain ; and especially the letters she had written to M. d'Auvergne, with others forwarded to M. de Rosny by

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Parry to Lord Viscount Cranbourn. MS. Cotton. Vesp. E. XI. p. 112, 114.

the said count. "Confess all, madame; the king will pardon you, and not only yourself, but all for whom you may intercede." Henriette loftily replied, "Perfidy is the aliment of M. d'Auvergne; for myself, monsieur, I have no confession to make. I demand nothing but justice, and competent judges." The conference lasted from two in the afternoon until five o'clock; as Sillery, finding that his expostulations were lost upon Henriette, proceeded to subject her to a severe interrogatory.

During the interview a council extraordinary was holden at the Louvre, to examine the papers seized in the castles of Marcoussy, Malesherbes, and Verneuil; as Henry had despatched commissioners to confiscate all written documents found at the abode of his mistress, from whence she was supposed to direct her treasonable machinations. Within the mysterious closet at Marcoussy M. d'Entraques had amassed a large quantity of documents, of no political import: a portfolio, however, came to light, which contained proof as positive of his disloyal intents as his most virulent enemy might desire. The papers contained in this portfolio were five in number: 1st, there was the cypher and its key, used by Zuniga and the Spanish ministers in their ordinary communications with king Philip. 2ndly, a letter in French, written to M. d'Entraques by Philip III., and signed *Yo el Rey*. 3rdly, a letter of similar import, addressed by his Catholic majesty to Madame de Verneuil. 4thly, a third letter in Spanish, from king Philip to M. d'Auvergne. 5thly, another

letter in French, signed *Yo el Rey*, in which the king of Spain made solemn oath, that if the young Henri de Bourbon, son of la Marquise and king Henry, was delivered to his guardianship and custody, he would recognize him as dauphin of France, and true heir to the crown of that realm. That, pending the success of this policy, he would establish the said dauphin in Portugal; and assign to him five fortresses and a pension of 50,000 gold crowns. As for MM. d'Entragues and d'Auvergne, king Philip covenanted, on the establishment of M. le Dauphin and his mother in Portugal, to give them each a pension of 20,000 ducats and a residence within his dominions; and to assist them hereafter to place the dauphin on the throne by arms, money, and diplomacy.<sup>1</sup> These important evidences of the guilt of the accused were delivered by the king to his attorney-general, to lay before the parliament. The papers found at Verneuil contained no evidences of treason; excepting that several copies of letters addressed by Henriette to her kindred in France and England, made mention of their majesties, and especially of the queen, in language which it might have been deemed impossible for so fair a hand to indite. The discovery which most affected his majesty, however, was a collection of love-letters and verses, which Madame de Verneuil had treasured, and which had been addressed to her by the principal cavaliers of the court. There

<sup>1</sup> Arrest du Sieur d'Entragues—MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, vol. 661, fol. 91. Le Laboureur sur Castelnau. Genealogies de la famille de Balzac Entragues. De Thou, liv. 132.



were letters from the prince de Joinville, which Henry perused with avidity; and also from the duke de Guise. A letter from the duke de Bracciano, filled with expressions of gallant homage, his majesty maliciously reserved for the private perusal of his consort. One letter from M. de Sigognes, however, of recent date, greatly irritated his majesty. "The king," writes the secretary of the English ambassador, "has ordered M. de Sigognes governor of Dieppe, to retire from court, being much offended towards him for writing letters to la Marquise, and signifying the king's disposition towards her. This was before her commitment."<sup>1</sup> The position of the illustrious accused meantime created in the courts of Europe the greatest commiseration and interest. From Spain no open intercession was offered, for fear of aggravating a position already sufficiently critical; but Philip III. indirectly served the cause of the unfortunate noblemen whom he had so egregiously duped. In England, James and his queen demonstrated intense sympathy; and the latter ventured even to write to queen Marie to solicit her clemency. Marie, however, was outraged and vindictive; and declared that there was no safety for herself and her children in France unless the heads of the persons guilty of so foul a treason fell on the scaffold: and in this opinion her majesty was supported by the chief members of the privy-council, and by a majority of the French people. It was therefore soon announced that the duke of Lenox

<sup>1</sup> MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X.

would visit the court of France to make intercession for his uncle d'Entragues and his cousin Madame la Marquise; and moreover, that the duke would be invested with powers, as ambassador extraordinary from the king of England, to unite the intercession of his Britannic majesty to his own. Meantime the English ambassador was instructed to render every service to the prisoners compatible with his duty towards king Henry. Sir Thomas Parry, however, enjoyed little popularity at the French court: he was a man of rigid morals, dry of speech, and almost a Puritan in religious profession. A few months previously, the procession on the festival of la Fête-Dieu was prevented from passing down the Rue de Tournon, on account of the opposition of the ambassador; who refused to permit the accustomed decorations to span the street before the vast hôtel which he occupied. "I will set fire to their idolatrous tapestry and flags, if these flaunt near to my hôtel," had been the threat of the ambassador. Sir Thomas had moreover a methodical and persistent mode of transacting business, which, though it met with commendation from Rosny, proved intensely disagreeable to his majesty. On the grievance of the Scotch cloth-merchants, until he obtained redress, Parry pursued the king through all his country residences; and several times stopped his majesty, as he was about to leave for the chase, to discuss the unwelcome subject; for Henry's condescension to the ambassador of his good brother of England was unbounded. Parry continued, on all occasions, to say a word concerning

la Marquise during these audiences ; for the complaints of the merchants were not redressed until after the arrival of the duke of Lenox. Discoursing one day soon after the arrests, of the probable visit of the latter nobleman to the court of France, Parry observed that sometimes he saw la Marquise from the windows of his house, as she walked in her garden. "I had rather that you should see her and be near her than the Spanish ambassador," replied his majesty. "Sire, she is a young lady, and, I doubt not, loyal to your majesty. If you would vouchsafe to speak with her, she would, I believe, satisfy you!" "No, monsieur," replied Henry ; "I have already bestowed 400,000 livres on her ; her offence is not against my person, but my state—but," added his majesty, "my person and my state are one!"<sup>1</sup> The countess d'Auvergne Charlotte de Montmorency, accompanied by her sister the beautiful duchess de Ventadour, threw herself at the king's feet one evening, in the presence of the court, and implored that mercy might be extended to her husband. Henry tenderly raised her from her suppliant attitude, and said, "Madame, I sincerely commiserate your unhappy position : but if I grant your prayer I must acquiesce in the imputations cast on the queen my consort, own my son the dauphin to be a bastard, and deliver up my kingdom to the horrors of civil contest. I will be as clement as I may ; mercy and justice are, as you know, the pillars which support the throne of

<sup>1</sup> MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X., January 3, 1605. Journal of Events.

France.”<sup>1</sup> The young countess then timidly asked permission to visit her husband, and appealed to the queen, who stood haughtily apart, showing no sign of commiseration. Henry reluctantly denied the request, as M. d’Auvergne was kept *au secret*; but he permitted the countess to send a message, or to make any written communication through the captain of the Bastille, de Ruvigny. Madame d’Auvergne immediately availed herself of the licence, and sent to ask her husband what she could do for him; and to pray him to forward his instructions, as she was prepared to serve him with devotion. “Tell madame la comtesse,” flippantly replied d’Auvergne, “not to trouble herself; I shall fare very well; only desire her to send me constant and plentiful supplies of cheese and mustard!” On the 14th of December, and the two following days, each of the accused was conveyed to the Palais, and subjected to a secret interrogatory, the details of which have not transpired. The pen of Parry’s secretary records, that “La Marquise was carried by the chevalier de Guet in a coach from her lodging to the premier president’s house: and that evening brought back again to her own house.”

Throughout the turmoil and excitement of these arrests the festivities of the court continued. Henry entertained the constable of Castile, Velasco duque de Frias, with great magnificence, on the re-

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV. Henri alluded to the device of Charles IX., and to his own privy seal, which displayed the crown of France upborne by the figures of Justice and Mercy.

turn of the latter from England, where he had been received with splendour and *empressement*. King James had signed a peace with Spain; and entered into certain stipulations relative to the United Provinces, none of which he gave himself concern to fulfil, though he shewed much anxiety for the exchange of courtesies with the Spanish court. So elated was Velasco by the honours which he had received in England, that he afterwards published a relation of his embassy, in which he records many quaint compliments paid him by king James. The ambassador was especially charmed with the sprightly graciosness of queen Anne of Denmark. The pomp of the ambassador's manner pleased the king: one day, hearing that Velasco was slightly indisposed, James honoured him by a visit. The constable rose and greeted his majesty in the words of the centurion, which are recorded in Scripture: "*Senor, no soy digno de que entres en mi casa*"—a salutation which greatly flattered the king.

Though the spirit of queen Marie was sad, her court was brilliant—the restless fancy of the king had again elevated an idol to console him in his chagrin relative to madame de Verneuil, and the domestic *ennui* which beset him. Mademoiselle de Beuil, niece of the consort of the duke de Bellegarde, had recently stepped on this pedestal, and did her utmost to banish the gloom which oppressed the king. As this lady was of distinguished rank, Henry married her to M. de Cézy,<sup>1</sup> one of the

<sup>1</sup> Philippe de Harlay, count de Cézy, who died in 1652.

most servile of the sycophants of the court, and eventually created her countess de Moret. The queen ridiculed this "*depit amoureux*," and did all she could to encourage the royal fancy; believing that, if the influence of la Verneuil could be permanently overthrown, she had little to dread from other rivalries. During Velasco's visit, therefore, madame de Moret presided at the festivities of l'hôtel Zamet. At a magnificent entertainment the constable rose to present to the king a basin of rosewater and a towel. Henry gently put them aside, observing, "that ceremony and state were banished from these *réunions*." His majesty then made some flattering allusions respecting the alliances between the royal house of Navarre and that of Velasco; the blazons of which, he said, might be seen on the façade of the famous Casa del Cordon of Burgos, the palace of the chieftains of Frias. Elated at the compliment, the courtly constable inclined profoundly. "Majesté," exclaimed he, "you honour me: but great kings, like the gods, can acknowledge neither relatives nor allies!" Velasco afterwards confessed that he prized this admission of alliance from the lips of Henri le Grand more than all the stately courtesies showered upon him at the court of king James.<sup>1</sup> The king, for an interval, continued to act as if cured of his passion for Henriette de Balzac. The personages

His marriage with Jacqueline de Beuil was soon after dissolved; and he married for his second wife Mademoiselle de Béthune, a relative of the duke de Sully.

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV. De Thou, Hist. de son Temps.

whom she had discountenanced suddenly found themselves basking in the sunshine of royal favour. Amongst others, madame de Villars was recalled from exile, at the prayer of the queen; and the prince de Joinville returned from his crusade in the East, while his brother the duke de Guise retired to his government. The pleasant house on the borders of the forest of Fontainebleau, that had once been the property of Madame, and which Henry had bestowed on madame de Verneuil, his majesty now resumed, and presented it to madame de Moret. Rosny, however, was not duped into believing that a new passion was about to exorcise the evil influences of Henriette de Balzac. The *fadaises* and prettinesses of madame de Moret,<sup>1</sup> and her affected reverence for queen Marie who patronized her, were not likely he divined, to hold permanent sway; or to make Henry forget the charms and brilliant wit of his captive of the Rue de Tournon.

The duke de la Trimonille, brother-in-law of M. de Bouillon, died about this period, at the age 34,

<sup>1</sup> Madame de Moret, croyant que Henri se refroidissait, s'avisait de faire la devote. Elle n'avoit alors que du linge uni, une grande pointe, une robe de serge, les mains nues; c'étoit pour les montrer, car elle les avoit belles. Henri IV. fut tué avant qu'elle eût achevé sa farce. Elle joua un autre personnage ensuite, car elle feignit de devenir aveugle. On croit que c'étoit pour faire pitié à la reine mère. M. de Vardes après se laisser attraper, et l'épousa. Elle est morte empoisonnée par inegarde. J'ai su depuis qu'on avoit fait un quiproquo chez l'apothecaire, et qu'on avoit donné du sublimé pour du cristal minéral. Tallemant des Réaux.



from the violence of the gouty maladies to which from childhood he had been a victim. The humour of M. de la Trimouille was facetious, and his tongue bitter; moreover, he advocated a degree of civil and religious liberty, which in this age was regarded as virtual apostasy and treason. M. de la Trimouille was not favoured by his royal master, and seldom visited the court; indeed, such was the distrust excited in high quarters by his actions, that M. de Thon, the duke's contemporary, hints that his early demise probably saved the house of la Trimouille from attainder. Rosny, who was intolerant when his own freedom of thought and liberty of diction were adopted by others, deprecated the influence of the duke over the Huguenots of the realm; and especially blamed M. de la Trimouille for the impulse which he had given to the intrigue, still afloat, to compel the king to recall the duke de Bouillon. The duke de la Trimouille was the uncle of the young prince de Condé; and the father of Charlotte Catherine de la Trimouille, the heroic countess of Derby, the heroine of Latham House, and "the last British subject who submitted to the victorious Commonwealth."

· B O O K   V I I I .



## CHAPTER I.

1605.

Continuation of the trial of the Balzac family—MM. d'Entraques and d'Auvergne—Their defence—Madame de Verneuil refuses to implore the royal mercy—Her resolution and interview with Rosny—Vacillation and disquietude of the king—Ambassage of the duke of Lenox—Madame de Verneuil is arraigned before the parliament for high treason—Her arrogance—Sentence of the High Court on the prisoners—Demise of Clement VIII.—Election of his successor—Demise of Leo XI.—Election of cardinal Borghese, who assumes the name of Paul V.—Marriage of Mademoiselle de Rosny with the Duke de Rohan—Matrimonial alliance proposed by Queen Marie between the duke de Bar and Marguerite de Gonzaga—Sentence of the High Court on the prisoners convicted of treason commuted by the king—Doom of Madame de Verneuil—Anger of the queen at the royal clemency—M. d'Auvergne—His life in the Bastille—Queen Marguerite institutes a suit to despoil M. d'Auvergne of the heritage of Catherine de Medici, her mother—Marguerite at Usson—Marriage of Mademoiselle de Guise and the prince de Conty—Political intrigues of the court—Plot

to overthrow the power of Rosny—Details—Irritation of the Protestant communities of the realm at the prolonged exile of the duke de Bouillon—Henry pardons Madame de Verneuil—Her return to court—Renewal of the intimacy between King Henry and Madame de Verneuil—Correspondence between the king and Queen Marie.

ON the reassembling of the High Court after the Christmas festivities of 1604, the trial of the Balzac family was continued. The commissioners were the president Jeannin, M. de Sillery, Achille de Harlay first president of the parliament of Paris, and MM. de Fleury and de Turin, advocates of note. The second interrogatory of M. d'Entragues opened the judicial proceedings of the new year. M. d'Entragues displayed much submission and resignation to his fate: his defence was conciliatory; and he carefully avoided offending royal susceptibilities, while pleading facts in extenuation of his dealings with Spain—intrigues, which, he said, he scorned altogether to deny. He exonerated his daughter Madame de Verneuil, from complicity in the plot; and even affected to doubt her knowledge of any discussions having been holden with Zuniga, other than concerning her residence in Portugal, and refuge in Flanders from any sudden peril which might arise from the enmity of the queen. As for M. d'Auvergne, the count avoided allusion to his proceedings; acknowledging, however, that he had been present at all the interviews which he himself had granted to the Spanish ambassador. In extenuation of these intrigues, M. d'Entragues pleaded the peril which menaced the life of his

daughter; the failure of the king's solemn promise to espouse Henriette, "whose descent was little inferior to that of her majesty the queen;" also, the contemptuous silence with which the king had treated a joint petition from himself and his daughter, presented during the preceding month of June at St. Germain en Laye. "I was willing to leave the kingdom—to say even farewell to my wife and children—finding myself exposed to odious suspicion; but all my prayers were in vain. Eventually my request was met by peremptory denial, upon some frivolous pretext; and I was deprived of what alone could support and console me under such adversity—I was forbidden to see my daughter. Meantime the rage of the queen burst forth afresh; and it was rumoured that the life of Madame la Marquise was in extreme danger; also that the implacable vengeance of the queen extended to her father and brothers. The observations made by her majesty when in public convinced me that she was irrevocably offended. My daughter, therefore, rarely accepted visits from the king, trusting that absence would stifle his majesty's attachment; and that voluntary retreat from court might pacify the irritation of the queen. As for myself, I was ready not only to leave the court, but to quit the realm. An auspicious opportunity soon offered; the daughter of the prince of Orange (one of the most intimate of my daughter's friends), intending to visit England, I proposed to attend her, if my daughter might accompany us. My design

was to proceed to Holland; and after a short sojourn there, to journey to Great Britain and visit my relatives, the duke of Lenox, and other noblemen. My daughter asked his majesty's permission, and did all she could to obtain this favour, but her entreaties were in vain; his majesty absolutely interdicted her departure. Nevertheless, the hate which was concentrated on my family increased. My daughter was informed of certain conspiracies plotted against our lives and fortunes. She threw herself again at the king's feet, and represented to him with tears the danger and annoyances to which she was exposed; and the necessity that some measures should be adopted to save the lives of her children. Her distress seemed to touch the heart of the king, and he promised to reflect on her demand."<sup>1</sup> M. d'Entragues proceeds to relate how his majesty subsequently again refused the desired permission; and that at this juncture Morgan appeared—the tempter—to seduce them into obtaining by treasonable means, that licence so harshly refused. “I, upon this refusal, held secret interviews with M. d'Auvergne, without my daughter's knowledge, as we thought it was useless to increase her intense anxiety and forebodings.” Nothing positive was elicited by the examination of M. d'Entragues, who assumed a humble and injured air, which seemed to indicate that he esteemed the king to be the author of all the mischief plotted; and himself the victim of his majesty's selfish fears. The examination of M. d'Auvergne

<sup>1</sup> Apologie de M. d'Entragues. De Thou, liv. 134.



was next proceeded with. He first refused to reply, or to acknowledge the jurisdiction, of the commissioners; alleging, that the king had aforesaid granted him letters of pardon under the great seal. "So," said he, "if I reply to any question touching upon past events, I may ignorantly invalidate that act of his majesty's gracious clemency." The judges were assembled to discuss this point; and their unanimous opinion was, that "the objections of M. d'Auvergne were frivolous, and that he was bound to reply." In the presence of Jeannin and Sillery, he then acknowledged that his sister Madame la Marquise, had resolved to leave the kingdom, dreading the wrath of the queen. The commissioners then put searching questions relative to the count's dealings, in conjunction with Biron, with the duke of Savoy; and especially, of the design then attributed to the conspirators of plotting an invasion of the realm, of which his late treasonable dealings seemed but the sequel. Auvergne pleaded the amnesty given by the king on his liberation from the Bastille: also, he declared that since that period he had had licence to negotiate with Spain under the king's hand on the same subjects; on condition that he put the French council in possession of the facts confided to him by Taxis and Zuniga. The commissioners objected; and produced the treasonable minutes seized at Marcoussy, to prove that M. d'Auvergne had formed designs of his own; also, that his guilty conscience had deterred him from obeying the repeated mandates sent him by the king to

leave the Château de Vic, and present himself at court. He was then asked whether he had given a copy of the promise *de matrimonio in futurum* to Zuniga to lay before the king of Spain? M. d'Auvergne replied in the negative; but confessed that the words of the promise had been often correctly repeated in the presence of the Spanish ambassador by M. d'Entragues. The commissioners then asked whether he had not given a portrait of M. de Biron to Madame la Marquise; also, a panegyric in praise of the former from his own pen? This charge M. d'Auvergne denied: but added, that he had negotiated in order to find asylum for himself in the dominions of Spain; as, in case of the king's demise, he held his life to be threatened by the enmity of queen Marie. The question was then put, whether he believed that the depositions made by M. d'Entragues and his daughter, in which he was concerned, might be accepted as candid and true? "Messieurs, these said personages have purposely irritated the mind of the king against me; I, therefore, hold their witness to be partial, uncandid, and inimical; I cannot subscribe to such testimony." The count then appealed to the king against being put on his trial before the High Court, on the pleas, that his previous treasons had been pardoned; that the correspondence for which he was arrested, he had pursued with the view of ascertaining the rancour borne by Spain against the realm of his Christian majesty; when it was his intention, as bound by his agreement, to make full revelation, and warn his majesty's minis-

ters of the cabals forming. The attorney-general Servin, therefore, by order of the court—the members of which were surprised by the assertion, that their king had connived at any correspondence of the nature deposed to by the accused—was empowered to proceed to the Louvre, and take his majesty's orders. Henry replied, “that the times had unfortunately compelled him to grant letters of abolition to M. d'Auvergne, and the licence also of which he boasted: that he had only conceded such in the hope of gaining a loyal subject; but as M. le Comte by his stubborn pride and ill-will, had refused to earn a pardon for fresh enormities by confession when summoned from Vic, he held that he was discharged from the engagement pleaded. That clemency and mild remonstrance had made no impression on the count; it was necessary, therefore, to use severe chastisement. Therefore, he authorized his High Court, without having regard to the letters of abolition, or to the licence pleaded, to proceed at once to the arraignment of M. le Comte d'Auvergne, according to the laws of the realm.<sup>1</sup>

Madame de Verneuil, during these proceedings, remained in close custody at her hôtel Rue de Tournon. Every device was resorted to by the king to subdue that haughty spirit, but without success. The chief courtiers, in turn, addressed letters

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 134 (edit. de Londres). Discours d'une Trahison attentée contre le roy Henri IV. Recueil de Pièces interessantes. Amsterdam, 1699, in 12mo. Interrogatoire de M. le Comte d'Auvergne.

exhorting la Marquise to humble herself and to ask audience. Madame de Verneuil persisted in speaking of and treating the king as a hard and unjust master, for whom she never had any kinder feeling. "*Elle traita le roi d'inconnu !*" says Rosny, in his reflections on the amazing weakness of the king, and the audacity of his mistress. Even the chevalier du Guet, the officer appointed to keep watch over her actions, received instructions to exhort his prisoner to dispense with his *surveillance* by appeal to the crown. Madame de Verneuil indignantly silenced her adviser. This person, nevertheless, being moved by her beauty and distress, and thinking to do her service, took upon himself, through Villeroy, to inform the king "that Madame la Marquise implored his mercy." Henry eagerly availed himself of the overture; and caused some comforting words to be transmitted, to the effect, "that such an appeal could not fail to be accepted, and acted upon at the proper moment." Madame de Verneuil, however, promptly intimated that she had authorized no such message—that the chevalier was a liar and a busybody, and that she had nothing to ask of king Henry, excepting justice!"<sup>1</sup> Rosny was, therefore, sent to examine Madame la Marquise on the conclusion of the interrogatory of M. d'Auvergne. In vain he implored to be excused from so unpleasant an ordeal; the more so, as he disapproved the king's conduct, "which was in reality but the advance of a lover, seeking to subdue the hostility of

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV., année 1604.

his mistress, but who trembled all the time lest each blow might further alienate the beloved object.”<sup>1</sup> La Marquise was shrewd enough to perceive her advantage; and she was wily enough to profit thereby. Henry’s orders, nevertheless, were peremptory; and Rosny, in his most cynical humour, and driest of moods, proceeded to the interview. Henry pretended that the sight of his friend, Rosny might move la Marquise; while she would naturally prefer to make the latter the medium of any concession she might now be willing to tender. On his arrival at the mansion in the Rue de Tournon, Rosny commanded the chevalier du Guet to produce his prisoner, to answer for her misdemeanours in the king’s name. Henriette, on the summons being transmitted, made response—“that she was retired in her chamber, and would see no one, as a bad cold in her face prevented her from being visible, even to M. de Rosny.” This audacity, and a feeling of uncertainty as to the king’s intentions respecting Henriette, compelled the austere minister to temporise: he, therefore, returned to the Arsenal, and despatched a gentleman to inquire at what hour Madame la Marquise could admit him; as he was commanded by the king to see her, and receive any statement she wished to make.<sup>2</sup> Meantime, Madame de Verneuil, repenting of her discourtesy towards a personage so privileged as

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 18ème. “Le roi ne peut se résoudre à la laisser un seul moment douter de son pardon.”

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Rosny, sent one of her guards to request the latter to repair again to her hôtel at two o'clock in the afternoon, when she would rise to receive him. He therefore returned at the time indicated by la Marquise; convinced, however, that his former repulse was the consequence of having omitted first to ascertain the pleasure of the prisoner, as to the hour most agreeable to accept his visit. Madame de Verneuil had now been under strict arrest for more than six weeks; she had seen no one; her damsels had been removed, and she was restricted to the services of one ancient firewoman. The seclusion, however, had not diminished her spirit. "I entered the presence of a woman," writes Rosny, "from whom humiliation and severity had taken nothing of her arrogance; and who, instead of humbling herself to ask pardon, spoke as the person aggrieved, and who expected herself to name the conditions of her release from durance." Rosny began by reproaching la Marquise for the criminality of her proceedings with Spain; and especially for her odious design to procure the disinherison of M. le Dauphin. "Madame, you will have every reason to deem yourself fortunate if such crimes are compounded for by your voluntary banishment after you have undergone the public ordeal of a criminal interrogatory. As to your affectation of comparing yourself to her majesty our mistress, and your children to the children of France, such pretensions are simply ridiculous. To atone for your malignity in sowing discord between their majes-

ties, be sure madame, that your sentence will include the necessity of throwing yourself at the knees of the queen, to supplicate her pardon and oblivion of the past." He then taunted her with the hypocrisy of her pretended devotion, "which was assumed to vex and irritate the king;" he next enumerated the gallant episodes of which the perusal of her papers convicted her; but which Henriette always averred existed only in the jealous imagination of the king. La Marquise listened in silence to this harangue; she then replied with a contemptuous curl of the lip, "that she was obliged for the advice, and would take time to consider its import." Rosny then by command put the question—"whether Madame la Marquise had any special grievance to plead in extenuation of her crimes?" "If the king has directed you to put this question his majesty dissimulates, inasmuch as he knows my grievance better than any other person; but, monsieur, if it is yourself who ask this question, I reply, that you have no right to inquire, as you have not the means of redress in your power," replied Henriette, insolently. "What, then, do you desire from the king, madame?" "I desire that the king will grant leave to my father, my mother, myself, and my children to leave France: as for my brother, as he apparently suffers for my sake, I ask also his liberty!"<sup>1</sup> "I purposely made her repeat this demand six or seven times: I began to hope that her

<sup>1</sup> Sully, Mem., liv. 18ème—(Economies Royales, t. 2.



imprisonment and that of her kindred had in reality made her unalterably resolve upon this step. She further informed me, "that it was not her intention to die of hunger in a foreign land; that she would not permit the queen to triumph in the spectacle of her misery and destitution; and that she, therefore, demanded a settlement of at least 100,000 francs annually, which, after all, was a trifling compensation for all that she could rightfully and legitimately claim at the hand of the king." Henriette then denied with violence that she had plotted against the peace of the realm; or that she knew of the treasonable intrigues of her kindred. "Well might I, monsieur, look around in dismay for refuge, aghast at the violence of la Florentine; and when I reflected upon my probable doom, did I chance to survive the king—tribulations for which the said king is answerable!" Tears, graces, and feminine wiles were in turn adopted by la Marquise; then she had recourse to that wit and *verve* which enthralled even more than her beauty. When these expedients failed to move her stern mentor, Madame de Verneuil again resorted to bold defiance, and aptness of retort. "I never expected to derive enlightenment from my interview with Madame la Marquise de Verneuil; I could not, however, help feeling confidence in her demand for permission to leave the realm, if only I could persuade the king to consent." Rosny left the Rue de Tournon, intent on winning the royal assent; and transporting Madame la Marquise from the realm before she had time to change her design.

Henry, to the intense grief and disappointment of his zealous minister, peremptorily refused.<sup>1</sup> “I supplicated, I entreated, I pressed my prince by every motive, and on every policy; I returned to the combat several times; my zeal resembled persecution; but all to no purpose—never was there anything more incomprehensible, or motive so inscrutable! I also observed that his majesty, even when most exasperated, spoke concerning Madame de Verneuil in terms very different to those used in the written orders drawn up, to be shown to her. The same peculiarity I remarked in the conduct of Madame la Marquise; as if, in the period of their greatest anger, these two hearts imperceptibly relied a little on the knowledge which each possessed of the other. Whether the king’s patient clemency arose from the fact, that he had unfortunately furnished his mistress with arms against himself in past times, and was, therefore, unwilling to reduce her to despair; or that secrets of the last importance were known only to them, and which Henry, either from shame or sorrow, could not confide to me, will never be ascertained.” “The

<sup>1</sup> “Le roi demanda s’il donnerait quelque chose à Madame de Verneuil, pour la marier à un prince qu’elle disoit la vouloir épouser, si elle avoit 100,000 ecus. Bellièvre dit: Sire, je suis d’avis que vous donniez 100,000 beaux ecus à cette demoiselle pour lui trouver un bon parti. Sully répondit, qu’il étoit bien aise de nommer 100,000 ecus, mais difficile de les trouver. Le chancelier répondit: Sire, je suis d’avis que vous preniez 200,000 ecus, même 300,000, si à moins ne se peut—et c’est mon avis!” Bassompierre — *Journal de sa Vie*. Sully, liv. 18.

king wished to humble his mistress, and not to exile or alienate her," says Rosny, in another part of his narrative. The danger for the other accused persons was, however, real and imminent. Report so greatly magnified the king's wrath, that the public doubted not that the fair head of la Marquise would fall with those of her father and brother on a scaffold. The duke of Lenox, meantime, with a suite of English noblemen, which included the high-admiral Lord Howard, and Sir Thomas Erskine, set out from London to offer the intercession of king James and his own, on behalf of his uncle M. d'Entragues, and his daughter. So illustrious a kinsman and ambassador, whose father was cousin-german to Darnley, consort of Mary Stuart, and father of king James, increased the *prestige* and the personal confidence of the prisoners.<sup>1</sup> The interrogatories nevertheless continued; Henry showed himself severe towards M. d'Auvergne; and irritable and vacillating in his dealings with the other accused. Queen Marie made great show of indignation at the mission of Lenox; and even insisted that his visit should be declined. The most

<sup>1</sup> Ludovic, duke of Lenox, was the son of Esmé, duke of Lenox, and grandson of John, lord d'Aubigny, younger brother of Matthew earl of Lenox, grandfather of king James. In 1623 this nobleman was created duke of Richmond. He married three times: 1st, the Lady Amabel, sister of Earl Gowrie; 2nd, the sister of Sir Hugh Campbell; 3rdly, Frances, daughter of John Howard Viscount Bindon, and widow of the earl of Hertford. The duke of Richmond and Lenox died in 1623-4.

splendid preparations were, nevertheless, made for the duke's reception. The palace of the duke de Piney Luxembourg was assigned for his abode; to which his mother, the sister of M. d'Entragues, removed to receive him, having previously arrived from England on news of the arrest of her kindred, to whom she was tenderly attached. Lenox was met by the duke de Retz, and by a great suite of noblemen, and conducted to his abode.<sup>1</sup>

On the day of the duke's arrival, January 18th, Morgan underwent another interrogatory; he deposed that he had frequented the hôtel of the Spanish Embassy solely with the view of procuring payment of the 6,000 crowns owing to him by the deceased queen of Scotland; while his interviews with M. d'Entragues were sought with the intention of obtaining letters to the duke of Lenox and M. de Taxis, that through their intervention the debt might be discharged. Finally, he was ignorant that amongst his papers he possessed a copy of the promise *de matrimonio in futurum*; and that, being a foreigner and an exile, he humbly besought the royal pardon if he had transgressed.<sup>2</sup> Such was the sum of Morgan's avowals, to which no credence was attached, as documents before the High Court afforded testimony that he had participated in the intrigues, and had served the Balzac family as their agent. Under former kings, both Morgan and

<sup>1</sup> Journal of advertisements and occurrences of the English ambassador (Sir Thomas Parry) at Paris. Vespasian, F. X. MS. Cotton. British Museum.

<sup>2</sup> De Thou, liv. 134.

Chevillard, the subordinate personages of the conspiracy, would have been put to torture to extort confession. The same day MM. d'Entraques and d'Auvergne were confronted; but each refused to plead, or to offer justification, "such details being likely to offend the king, and to offer disrespect to the royal majesty." Entraques further refused to corroborate the assertions of his step-son in any particular, "as he perceived that it was the intention of M. le Comte to implicate and ruin his sister, Madame la Marquise." M. d'Auvergne, in his frivolous credulity, thought that to incriminate Henriette would conduce to the preservation of his life; he having more reliance on her influence, prisoner as she was, than on his own innocence. The last scene in the drama of this state trial had now only to be enacted,—the appearance of all the accused in turn before the assembled Chambers,—after which the members were to deliberate, return their verdict, when sentence was to be pronounced by the chancellor, M. de Bellièvre.

Meanwhile, the duke of Lenox was received by their majesties at the Louvre.<sup>1</sup> He was conducted thither by the duke de Rohan and the marshal de Roquelaure, and ushered into the royal presence by the dukes de Guise, Nemours, Nevers, Brissac, the prince de Joinville, and the count de Somerive. "The king entertained the duke very graciously," writes the secretary of the English

<sup>1</sup> The 18th—the duke of Lenox arrived at the Louvre: more than 30 coaches were sent to convey the duke's train.  
—Journal of Occurrences. MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X.

ambassador.<sup>1</sup> "He visited the queen, and was conducted back to his lodging by M. de Rohan. On the 23rd, Lenox was again admitted to audience in the garden attached to the hôtel de Villeroy. He walked with the king, and was an hour talking with Villeroy, and others of the council. He also solicited the king on behalf of his distressed kindred. In the evening the duke went to a ballet at the Louvre." On the 25th of January, M. d'Entragues was brought before his judges in la Chambre Dorée. The king left Paris for St. Germain, on purpose to be absent during the trial and sentence,<sup>2</sup> after having made one more effort to subdue the contumacy of Madame la Marquise, who had not been permitted to see her kinsman Lenox. When informed that she was implicated by the testimony of M. d'Auvergne, Henriette replied, "that she now solicited only three things from his majesty,—pardon for her father, a rope for M. d'Auvergne, and justice for herself!"<sup>3</sup> Before each of the prisoners appeared at the bar, it was notified to them that the king commanded and permitted full revelations; and released each of the accused from the consequences of any statement they might make in self-justification. M. d'Entragues availed himself of this permission to

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. "The king and queen went from Paris to St. Germain, as it is thought, purposely to be absent from being pressed and solicited about the prisoners, and that the process might be ended while they remained there."

<sup>3</sup> Journal de Henri IV. 1605.

explain the circumstances of his interviews with Taxis and Zuniga; he stated that his anguish was deep that his daughter should be reputed *une femme perdue*, and menaced by the hatred of Marie de Medici—a princess of a race so implacable in resentment. “My daughter was entirely ignorant of my *liaisons* with Spain, in proof of which she appealed to the royal protection against the menaces of the queen. The king thereupon offered her the castle of Caen—and if the proposition was not accepted, it was owing to the refusal of his majesty to permit us, for our safety, to nominate the governor of that town!”<sup>1</sup> The count neither affirmed nor denied the authenticity of the documents taken from his apartment at Marcoussy. The trial ended, M. d’Entragues retired to his chamber in the Conciergerie, where his wife was permitted to meet him. The day following, January 27, 1605, M. d’Auvergne and Madame de Verneuil were cited to appear before the Chambers. The old ground against M. d’Auvergne was diligently investigated; and some of the letters taken from la Rochette were given into court, and read for the first time in the presence of the accused. When no longer able to deny the conspiracy, the count implicated every person named in the act of arraignment; he inveighed against his sister; and exhibited great excitement and want of self-command. He pleaded the royal pardon; but offered neither proof, nor called witnesses to testify

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 134. Apologie de M. d’Entragues. Interrogatoire de M. le comte d’Entragues.



to his loyal fidelity. The same day the officers in charge of Madame de Verneuil were commanded to notify to the prisoner that she was to hold herself in readiness at midday, to accompany the provost and his archers to the Palais, there to undergo her trial for high treason. The self-command of la Marquise was severely shaken at this notification; she wept, and seemed for a time pensive, as if meditating some project—probably the expediency of appealing to the protection of the king. When told, however, that his majesty was at St. Germain, her courage revived; and she then refused, with her former wilful pertinacity, to appear on that day before the High Court, as she declared “that she would apparel herself to the place and to her misfortune;” and desired to have warning given to her over night, that she might attire herself.<sup>1</sup> Madame de Verneuil then retired to bed, and feigning illness, sent in great haste for her apothecary, and commanded him to open a vein, as she felt in danger of suffocation. An hour subsequently, when the functionaries of justice appeared, bear-

<sup>1</sup> MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X. Journal of Occurrences, etc. “The Marquesa was sent for to be brought to the Palais before the parliament; but when the chevalier du Guet came to her to notify the commandment which he had received to bring her thither, she refused, and would by no means go at that time, because she said she would apparel herself to the place and her misfortune, and thereupon went to bed, and willed him to give her warning over night that she might attire herself.—Journal of Sir Thomas Parry, fol. 79, MS.

ing a peremptory mandate to escort the prisoner before the tribunal of the parliament, they were informed that madame la Marquise was indisposed, and confined to her bed, having just had a vein in her arm opened.”<sup>1</sup> Following the example of M. de Rosny, the provost retired, without insisting on being admitted to the chamber of the prisoner; or causing the truth of her excuse to be investigated. When the king was informed of this conduct, he shrugged his shoulders, laughed, but declared that he admired his mistress the more for her spirit. On the last day of January, Madame de Verneuil was transported with guards, and all the *appareil* of a criminal, to la Chambre Dorée, where she was accommodated with a chair within the bar. She was dressed in mourning, her hair powdered, and partly hidden under a veil of rich lace. Her arm was in a sling, and her countenance somewhat paler than usual. She, however, composedly exchanged salutations with several of the chief members, who, previous to her arrest, had eagerly sought her patronage; and her eyes frequently were fixed on the latticed gallery reserved for the court, behind which some personages were seated. Madame de Verneuil was subjected to a rigorous examination: she, however, boldly denied everything, stating that she had seen M. de Taxis once only at her abode, and that with the knowledge and permission of the king; that she was totally ignorant of the conferences holden by her father and

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV., année 1608.

brother with Taxis and others, having been even apprised of the fact by the lips of his majesty; that when her father and her brother asked his Catholic majesty to grant her a refuge in his dominions, they never contemplated the abduction of her son, who was to remain in France. She was then questioned on the nature of her relations with Louis de Velasco, son of the constable of Castile; and whether it was true that the former was to meet her on the frontier with 300 horse, to protect her retreat into the dominions of Spain? also, whether Philip III. had not covenanted to bestow upon her a pension of 50,000 ducats? Henriette smiled derisively; and declared that she knew nothing of such stipulations. When called upon to speak in defence of her conduct, Henriette addressed the court with calmness and energy.<sup>1</sup> She recapitulated all the facts of her *liaison* with the king; and commented bitterly on the royal turpitude, while bewailing her own credulity, in having placed faith in the king's proposal to repair the injury inflicted "on our noble house," by marriage, so soon as divorce from queen Marguerite could be obtained. "Madame la Marquise, when brought before the court of parliament, answered, it is said,

<sup>1</sup> "On the last day of January, Marquesa was brought before the court of parliament, where, it is said, she answered very stoutly, and with good discretion, rehearsing many secrets and particulars which had passed between her and the K. at his first solicitation—sentence not yet pronounced," writes the secretary and amanuensis of Sir Thomas Parry.—MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X.

very stoutly, and with good discretion, rehearsing many secrets and particulars which had passed between her and the king at his first solicitation," is the record of Parry's busy secretary. When the guards appeared to conduct her from the chamber, Madame de Verneuil rose, and, with a haughty salutation drew her veil before her face, and walked through the folding-doors with unfaltering step. She, however, shed a few tears on re-entering her coach; and, on her arrival at her hôtel, retired immediately to her bed, where she was speedily comforted in her perturbation by a royal messenger from St. Germain, to inquire after her health.

A few days subsequently, the Parliament gave sentence—all the prisoners being found guilty of high treason, and of having conspired against the life of his majesty the king—"in reparation of which the High Court decrees that Charles Bastard of Valois count d'Auvergne, Francois de Balzac count d'Entragues, and Thomas Morgan, after being deprived of their honours and dignities, shall suffer the penalty of decapitation by the hands of the headsman on a scaffold in the Place de Grève, their estates and substance being confiscated to the crown. As for Henriette de Balzac marquise de Verneuil, the High Court condemns her, pending fresh information and accusations, to be confined for life, her head being previously shaved, in the nunnery of Beaumont les Tours; and forbids her to hold outward communication, or to speak to any persons excepting the members of the cloistered

sisterhood.”<sup>1</sup> When Bellièvre had pronounced sentence, the attorney-general rose to ask for an order staying execution of the decree pending the royal pleasure; a demand which was of course granted, though a concession much deprecated. The sentence was no sooner pronounced than a messenger carried the tidings to the Louvre. His majesty communicated the fact to Rosny—“the king drew me apart, and asked me what effect I thought that this sentence would produce on the conduct of la Marquise? Sire, you can yourself best reply to your question. If you have given the said lady reason to believe that you are animated with righteous indignation, you will doubtless behold her have recourse to tears and submission: but if she has reason to conclude that your rigour towards herself proceeds from a *dépit amoureux*, she will abate not one whit in her arrogance.” The king fell into a fit of meditation: after the lapse of a few minutes he said to his minister: “I should wish much that you would pay la Marquise another visit. She will perhaps ask your intercession.” Rosny, however, respectfully requested to be dispensed from this errand; he reminded the king, that her majesty resented his previous visit, had now spoke as if he was an abettor of Madame de Verneuil, and therefore a

<sup>1</sup> De Thou. Dupleix. Mercure François, t. 1-2. Sully, (Economies Royales. Journal de Henri IV. MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, 661, fol. 91. Discours d’une trahison contre Henri IV. Archives Curieuses, etc. Vie de Henriette de Balzac—Dreux du Radier. Vie de Marie de Medici, ibid. Hist. de la Mere et du Fils, t. 1.

base and venal flatterer. Rosny doubtless believed, that, with such potent intercession at hand as that of king James, and of Lenox, he might be dispensed from incurring the ill-will of the queen; who might probably one day wield the sceptre of France as regent.

The day following, February 12th, the Louvre presented a scene of excitement, and busy goings between the great and influential personages of the court. The duke of Lenox waited early on the king to solicit that sentence might not be carried into effect, at least as regarded Henriette de Balzac and her father; "who were more to be pitied than condemned. "The state of my uncle and his daughter," wrote Lenox a few days subsequently, "remaineth in the same form it did: and his majesty's displeasure hath little other grounds but his (M. d'Entragues) dissuasion of his daughter from him; but I hope all will end well, and a reconciliation made."<sup>1</sup> On Wednesday, the 14th, being Candlemas Day, as Henry was leaving his apartment to attend mass, Madame d'Entragues and her youngest daughter Marie de Balzac, threw themselves at the king's feet and besought him to spare the lives of MM. d'Entragues and d'Auvergne; and to have mercy on la Marquise. The sight of their tears profoundly affected the king; he raised the suppliants with words of sympathy, and promised to assemble his council in the afternoon to consider the expediency of granting a mitigation of the

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lenox to Lord Cranbourn, MS. Cotton. Calig. E. XI. fol. 118.

award. "Go, mesdames, meantime, and pray that God may grant me right inspirations. I am now on my way to mass, and will supplicate for the same favour!"<sup>1</sup> Madame d'Auvergne also, made intercession for her husband, who, however, appeared little affected at his position; but comforted himself with his supplies of cheese and mustard, and in singing snatches of popular ballads to enliven his solitude. Henry kept his promise, and held council that same afternoon. The ministers unanimously exhorted him to suffer the sentence to be carried into effect. "Sire, to pardon such monstrous crimes, is to emancipate from loyal obedience all personages illustrious by birth, or office: certes, after the execution of M. de Biron, no criminal ought to obtain pardon for such offences. If this decree be not executed, the sentences of the High Court will be deemed theatrical representations, instead of, as of old, an awful power to control the evil-doer, and to avenge crime." The queen also clamorously demanded that execution should be done; and sullenly refused to listen to intercession, declaring "that the decision of his majesty involved her own life, and the life and prosperity of M. le Dauphin!" In spite of these considerations, Henry had resolved to spare the condemned: being determined to rescue Henriette de Balzac, his

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV., année 1605. Moreri Diet. "Le roi avec la larme a l'œil les releva toutes deux, et leur dit qu'il voulait faire paroître qu'il etait bon, qu'il assembleroit son conseil des le jour même pour en resoudre."—Etoile.



majesty felt that he could not consign her kindred and accomplices to the scaffold. "Can I decapitate the grandfather of my children?—can I doom to the scaffold the son of Charles IX., and the uncle of my children?" were questions pertinently put by Henry to Villeroy. Henry also pleaded the intercession of the king of England, of the duke of Lenox, and his kindred; likewise his own promise relative to M. d'Auvergne to the kings his predecessors.<sup>1</sup> After receiving the advice of the privy council, Henry adopted a middle course, and declared his intention to respite the prisoners during pleasure, when further counsel could be taken on the matter;—which decision was at once made public, to the amazement and merriment of Henry's good subjects of Paris. Towards the end of February, Henry's lenient intentions with respect to Henriette were manifest,<sup>2</sup> as she was allowed to see certain personages of her kindred,—but not the duke of Lenox,—though she continued to be subjected to the *surveillance* of the chevalier du Guet. Henriette had yet vouchsafed no sign of submission, nor had she made overtures to propitiate his majesty; she refused to solicit her own

<sup>1</sup> Henry III. on his death-bed specially commended to his successor Henry IV. the fortunes of the count d'Auvergne and of the duke de Bellegarde.

<sup>2</sup> "Marquesa has liberty to have any of her friends (February 25), and it is supposed that the K. intends to set her at liberty before the duke's (of Lenox) departure, to render him contentment. It is thought that Morgan shall be likewise liberated."—*Journal of Occurrences*, MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X.

pardon, or that of M. d'Auvergne. Her father's attainder, however, she took greatly to heart, and prayed on his behalf the intercession of Rosny and Villeroy; though refusing herself to put pen to paper to ask the boon. "As for myself, let the king consummate my perdition: where there is no crime, it is ignominy to solicit pardon!"<sup>1</sup> said Henriette, in reply to the entreaties with which she was beset. The convent of Beaumont les Tours was a Benedictine community of sixty nuns, and an abbess, who was usually a lady of high rank. The nuns were cloistered, and renowned for their strict rule, and for the unsullied repute of their community. The intelligence could not have been flattering to the austere inmates of Beaumont that their house had been selected as a penitentiary for the witty and reprobate Henriette; whose guilty competition with their sovereign mistress queen Marie, was now aggravated by a charge of meditated regicide. On the 3d of March, Lenox had audience of farewell, perceiving that he might now confide the fate of his kindred to the clemency of the king. "His majesty promised that his parents (relatives?) in prison should be pardoned absolutely, and restored to their goods and houses. After the duke had taken leave, the king caused a wolf to be let loose before him, which was fought by dogges. M. de Rohan came for

<sup>1</sup> "La Marquise disoit qu'elle ne se souciait de mourir, au contraire qu'elle le desiroit; mais quand le roy le feroit, on dirait toujours qu'il avoit fait mourir sa femme, et qu'elle estoit reine devant l'autre!" Journal de Henri IV., ann. 1604.

the duke and brought him back again to his lodging. The duke went to take leave of the queen. He then went to visit Villeroy and Rosny, and the Marquise also, by order of the council; but none of his company permitted to enter. The cause why the duke had been to speak to her, was to persuade the Marquise to intercede for her father's liberty; and to carry herself pleasing to the king, as his majesty wishes to enjoy her society again. The duke afterwards sent his mother to speak to the king; who replied that to-morrow he was to go to Chantilly, the constable's house, where he should spend three days, and on his return he would advise to do somewhat for their liberty."<sup>1</sup> The duke of Lenox, during his sojourn in Paris, applied to the nuncio for permission to take his young sister the Lady Elizabeth Stuart, from a nunnery in Paris, where she had been placed by her mother, and had completed her noviciate. The charms of the young girl touched the heart of Howard earl of Arundel, who had accompanied Lenox to France; and after the profession of the lady Elizabeth had been formally annulled by the pope, her marriage with the heir of Norfolk was solemnized.<sup>2</sup> Lenox was dismissed from the French court with every honour, and gratified by rich presents. The king immediately wrote to his ambassador in England, stating, that out of

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Occurrences, written by the secretary of the English ambassador in Paris, Sir Thomas Parry. MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

consideration for so illustrious an ambassador favoured by king James, he had granted life to M. d'Enragues, and remitted the confiscation of his estates.

During Henry's sojourn at Chantilly, he received intelligence of the demise of the supreme pontiff, Clement VIII. From the period of the reconciliation of the king to the Church, Clement had enjoyed great popularity in France, and his death was sincerely lamented. His pontifical rule had been light ; he was conscientious in his policy, though profuse in his bounty to his own kindred. All the chief offices in the papal states were filled by members of the Aldobrandini family. Clement enriched his nephews by enormous benefactions ; and had recourse before his demise, to every legitimate measure to prepare for the election of Pietro Aldobrandini to the tiara. He was liberal in his toleration of heresy ; and was the first pope who removed the prohibition which forbade a heretic to enter the boundaries of the Holy city. Clement died on the 3rd of March, 1605, after a painful and lingering malady, which for months previously so crippled his limbs, that the cardinal chamberlain was compelled to support the hands of his holiness when called upon to bestow his benediction. The cardinals assembled in conclave on the expiration of the accustomed *neucaine* of mourning. The cardinals, who were deemed likely to obtain a majority of suffrages were—Baronius, the famed author of the *Annales Ecclesiastiques* ; Antonio Sauli, a prelate of saintly life and conduct, who

was supported by the influence of Spain ; and the cardinal de Medici, who commanded the support of France. Of the three candidates, cardinal Baronius, but for the opposition manifested by Sessa, would have united all suffrages ; for Henry willingly accepted the proposed pontificate of a churchman professing opinions so liberal and enlightened. The Spanish government, however, thought its possessions in Italy assailed by a passage in the eleventh volume of the great work of Baronius ; in which, alluding to the possession of Sicily by Philip III., he declared that the crown of Spain had no claim to that territory, and would find difficulty in substantiating such rights. To elect a pope avowing such a conviction, was regarded as suicidal ; and every practice of libel, insinuation, and detraction was resorted to in order to defeat his chance of success. Libellous letters were publicly read in consistory by the cardinal dean Ptolomée Gallo—the which it was alleged had been forwarded by the viceroy of Sicily, the duque de Feria—to demonstrate the evil which such revolutionary speculations had caused. Baronius rose, and with eloquent dignity vindicated his opinions, which he averred had received the sanction of the Holy See. “This attack is directed against the freedom of election to this See, rather than against my Annals, the which have been examined by the Sacred College and by the sovereign Pontiff. Peter has perused them ! Peter has sanctioned them !—Resting on that impregnable rock, I defy the assault of my foes,

knowing that they shall not prevail against me!"<sup>1</sup> The oration was received with applause; but so formidable seemed the displeasure of the Catholic king, and so great his influence over the Italian cardinals, that Baronius had no chance of success. Bellarmine was subsequently proposed by the faction of the late pope's nephew; but at length all suffrages rested on the cardinal de Medici, who was proclaimed amid acclamations, and assumed the name of Leo XI. French interest gave the tiara to the kinsman of Marie de Medici. "The election of this pope," says Duplessis Mornay, "cost the king 300,000 crowns." The news of the election was received with transport by the French, who revered the negotiator of the Peace of Verbins; and forgot not the moderation and pacific deportment evinced by the cardinal during his residence in France. Paris was illuminated; and salutes of artillery from the Arsenal and Bastille celebrated the election of the pontiff; while thanksgiving services were performed in all the churches of the realm. The joy of the queen was intense; Marie rejoiced that—"one of her kinsmen had attained to the summit of human glory, as it afforded some compensation for her own dishonoured existence!" In Rome, however, while Marie thus exulted, gloom and lamentation prevailed: after a brief pontificate of 25 days, the pope expired, as it was said, from the fatigue and excitement attending his procession to the church of St. John La-

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 34.

teran, which brought on crysipelas.<sup>1</sup> Again the contentious conclave met; again the factions battled: the belligerents were the cardinals de Montalto, Bellarmine, Camillo Borghese, Baronius, and Sauli." In the midst of the discussion, says de Thou, "Aldobrandini suddenly proposed Dominic Tosco Cardinal de Reggio. The Spanish faction approved the choice. Tosco was dragged from his chamber and conducted to the Sistine chapel, where the conclave assembled to offer him homage. Already he believed himself to be pope. Baronius, however, protested against the election; and proclaimed that last of the Sacred College he would acknowledge its validity. Upon this, by the most astounding of revolutions, Tosco was abandoned; and a number of the cardinals gathered round Baronius, and bore him to the chapel of St. Paul, where they fell at his feet and hailed him pope!" During this confusion, the Aldobrandini faction rallied, and hastily proclaimed Borghese. The French cardinals, aghast at the prospect of a schism in the Church, supported the latter, and manœuvred so cleverly that Baronius and his cardinals gave in their acquiescence,—and thus unity of choice was established amid the assembled fathers of Christendom. Borghese was a popular prelate, of soft manner and insinuating tongue; his age was only fifty-two, which rendered

<sup>1</sup> "La longueur du chemin, le poids de ses habits pontificaux, l'ayant trop fatigué, la fièvre le prit avant qu'il fut arrivé au Vatican: il y mourût après 25 jours de pontificat, âgé de 70 ans."



him juvenile in comparison with previous pontiffs at their election.<sup>1</sup> The new pope assumed the name of Paul V., and, like his predecessor, took for his chief minister his sister's son, Scipione Carafelli, whom he created a cardinal, and to whom his holiness gave the name of Borghese. King Henry, as the election had been partly accomplished through the intervention of his ambassadors, ordered the same rejoicings in Paris to celebrate the event; withholding only the salutes of artillery, which, his majesty said, was a mark of honour conceded to the cardinal de Medici in consequence of his relationship to the royal family. Rosny approved of the election, especially when the first act of the new pontiff was to send cardinal Barberini as nuncio to Paris, with orders to consult the astute lord treasurer, on all matters, before even they were unfolded to his majesty.

The marriage of Mademoiselle de Rosny with the duke de Rohan<sup>2</sup> had meantime been celebrated at Ablon at the commencement of the month of March, 1605. So great and illustrious an alliance,

<sup>1</sup> The father of pope Paul V. was Antonio Borghese, *avocat consistorial*: his mother was donna Flaminia dei Stalli. The pope had three brothers, Horace, Francesco, and Giovanni Baptista de Borghese. His nephew Carafelli Cardinal Borghese became the pope's minister; his brother Giovanni governor of St. Angelo, and his brother Francesco, governor of the Vatican and of the Holy city.

<sup>2</sup> Henri de Rohan, first duke de Rohan, son of René Vicomte de Rohan, and Catherine de Parthenay, dame de Soubise. He died April 13, 1638, surviving his wife, the daughter of Sully, eight years.

flattered the pride of M. de Rosny; as it placed the name of Béthune high on the roll of the noble aristocracy of France. Marguerite de Béthune was a woman of high spirit and resolution; like her father, she was hard and practical, and disdained equivocation. She made the duke de Rohan a faithful and devoted wife, though her temper was imperious and wilful. The marriage was celebrated with great splendour; M. de Rosny gave his daughter a noble portion; while the king presented the bride and bridegroom with the large sum of 20,000 crowns, to defray the expenses of their outfit. At the termination of the ceremony, the bride was arrayed in her ducal mantle and coronet, and proceeded in state to the Louvre, where Henry greeted "*sa cousine de Rohan*." The king at the same time negotiated the alliance of Rosny's eldest son with Mademoiselle de Créquy the wealthy heiress of the duke de Lesdiguières. So great was now the prestige of Rosny, that the house of Lorraine disdained not his alliance; and would have bestowed a consort of their lineage on his son. The king, however, privately put an end to the project, by informing his faithful minister that he could not sanction such an alliance. The duke de Bar, also, at this period consulted the king on a fresh matrimonial alliance which he was desirous to contract with the princess Marguerite of Gonzaga, niece of queen Marie.<sup>1</sup> Henry entered into the project with alacrity: and the queen ex-

<sup>1</sup> Marguerite, daughter of Vincent I., duke of Mantua, and of Eleanore de Medici.

pressed herself gratified at the demand, and undertook to negotiate the marriage with her sister. A courier was, therefore, despatched to Mantua, at the expense of the king; which, considering the thrifty economies which Henry now practised in small matters, was thought to be an eminent token of approbation. The king, in his zeal for official retrenchment, grumbled at the expenses of the numerous couriers employed to convey despatches from his envoys at foreign courts; and actually commanded his ambassador in Rome, M. de Béthune, to send an express only on very important occasions! Notwithstanding this affectation of economy, in the privy-purse expenses of this same year we find the enormous sum noted of 1650 livres for a chain of 200 pearls, which the king presented to Madame la Comtesse de Moret for a New Year's Gift.<sup>1</sup> To Madame des Essarts another mistress, Henry gives the sum of 650 livres, on the occasion of the birth of a daughter. There is also entered a sum of 3,450 livres which the king expended in play at the hôtel de Roquelaure. The letters of the royal envoys are filled with complaints of the king's penuriousness in small matters; the onus of this thrift, however, fell upon Rosny, who was ac-

<sup>1</sup> Archives de Royaume de France.—Archives Curieuses, t. 15, 1e série. Amongst the curious items in the "comptes" of king Henry for the year 1607 are the following:—"la somme de 1 ecu à une femme qui a racoustré les bas de soye de la reine: la somme de 12 escus baillés à la reine, pour bailler à sa perruquière pour les cheveux."

cused of encouraging the stinginess of his royal master in every possible fashion, in order to realize that superlative triumph in his esteem, of—a surplus in the treasury chests of the Bastille.

On the return of the king to Paris, he was again beset with solicitations from the friends and relations of M. d'Entragues. "The duchess of Lenox, accompanied by M. d'Entragues' eldest daughter, and by the youngest sister of la Marquise, went to court to speak to the king concerning their liberty. It was observed that the king retired by himself into a window with the young demoiselle, and courted her extremely, making love to her very broadly before the company; but as touching the liberty of them, no assurance could be obtained, but only, according to custom, general promises."<sup>1</sup> King James also wrote to remind and thank his majesty for his promises; and to pray him soon to deliver the prisoners, whose health was suffering from anxiety and the confinement of a prison. Meantime the king was told that the spirits of Madame de Verneuil were extremely depressed; that the exhortations of her confessor were beginning to be really efficacious; and that Henriette was about to petition him to allow her to take the veil in the new convent of Capuchin nuns of Paris, founded by the will of the late queen Louise. Madame de Verneuil had volunteered already, it was reported, to sacrifice her beautiful tresses in

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Occurrences—MS. Cotton. Vesp. F. X. March 20.

token of the earnestness of her profession, had she not been dissuaded therefrom by her sister Marie de Balzac. In despair at subduing the constancy of his mistress, and being still blindly enamoured, Henry is supposed at this period to have himself sought an interview, when their late position became reversed, the king becoming the suppliant for pardon and reconciliation. Henriette asked the king for justice for herself, pardon for her father, and a rope for M. d'Auvergne. Three days afterwards, a royal decree—subsequently ratified by the High Court—permitted Henriette de Balzac to retire to her own château of Verneuil, instead of to the nunnery of Beaumont les Tours, pending further inquiry into her case. She was said to be under *surveillance*; and strict orders were given by the Court that she should neither see nor communicate with strangers, nor receive visitors.<sup>1</sup> The queen deeply felt this leniency, and wept, as she anticipated the future triumph of her rival; who now claimed to leave her prison, unsullied in repute, and with another grievance inscribed on the list of injuries which she had received from their majesties. In vain Madame Concini sought to offer consolation, and descanted on the impossibility that their former friendship could be resumed by the king and Madame de Verneuil: still Marie wept incredulously. Parry immediately wrote to his court to announce this intelligence. “The Marquise was this day discharged and set at liberty to return

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Parry to Lord Cranbourn, Paris, MS. Cotton. Calig. E. XI. 227.

to her house, with great cautions to forbear public visitations and congratulations. D'Entragues, her father, has assurance to be delivered in thirteen days. The queen had intended a solemn pilgrimage to Chartres, but the sudden deliverance of the Marquise did (it is thought) suddenly divert her devotion. She accompanied the king on Wednesday last towards Fontainebleau." MM. d'Entragues and d'Auvergne were more severely chastised than the ambassador anticipated: for it was not until the month of August that the king issued his decree annulling the sentence of death passed by the parliament. On the 21st of that month Henry sent down to the parliament an edict cancelling the sentence of forfeiture and confiscation of the estates and dignities of the criminals, and commuted the sentence of M. d'Auvergne into perpetual imprisonment in the Bastille; while M. d'Entragues received a free pardon, on condition that he never passed the limits of his park of Malesherbes. The fate of M. d'Auvergne seems a hard one in comparison to that of his stepfather and colleague Entragues; the king, however, was wearied of according pardon to a delinquent never penitent, grateful, or reformed. The fatal passion which beset M. d'Auvergne for intrigue was the bane of his honour and prosperity. In prison, his perpetual and ill-advised attempts to seduce his guards from their duty, increased the severity with which he was treated. The constable de Montmorency and the count's relatives of the blood royal seem to have made no attempt to procure his liberty;

all persons deeming intimacy with Auvergne to be dangerous, so foolhardy were his schemes and indiscreet his conduct. Madame d'Auvergne received a pass which admitted her at stated intervals to the Bastille: the young and gentle countess showed much devotion to her lord, who, however, indulged in unworthy lamentation for Madame de Château-Gay; "as rather than not see this said lady again, I would prefer banishment and the total loss of my dignities." When Auvergne made this assertion, he divined not that his threatened sacrifice was of likely accomplishment. The count's wealth was derived from Catherine de Medici, who, with the assent of Henry III., had disinherited her daughter Marguerite de Valois, and bequeathed the large heritage received from her mother Madelaine de la Tour d'Auvergne, to the illegitimate son of her son, Charles IX. D'Auvergne, therefore, was no sooner condemned to perpetual imprisonment and discountenanced by his majesty, than Marguerite addressed a petition to parliament praying for the abrogation of her mother's will, as unjust, illegal, and contrary to the conditions on which Catherine de Medici had herself succeeded to the rich fiefs in dispute. At the same time Marguerite wrote to the king, offering to settle these domains on the dauphin, reserving to herself a life interest only in their revenue, should she gain her suit. The fiefs claimed by the queen were the counties of Auvergne and Clermont, the barony of La Tour, and the county of Lauraguais; which latter terri-



tory being under the jurisdiction of the parliament of Toulouse, Marguerite also addressed a petition to that august body. Marguerite writes an energetic letter to the king on the subject; and advertises him that in the county of Auvergne there were four fortresses "strong almost as Usson, the captains of which do little else than consume the revenue thereof." The queen proposes to raze these castles, provided that her rights are restored to her under the good pleasure of his majesty. Marguerite, during this interval, had been meditating escape from the dreary fortress where she had passed eighteen years, the summer of her existence; and in which the civil wars of the League and her own misconduct held her captive. It is asserted that during this period the queen passed but once over the drawbridge of the castle. Few had been the alleviations of this rigorous seclusion; the queen was permitted to receive visitors, it was true, but few personages cared to risk the peril of a visit to the desolate region around Usson; which during the troubles, swarmed with brigands, and disbanded mercenaries, who found refuge in the mountain fastnesses of Auvergne. The reports of the queen's malpractices, while resident at Usson, prevented many of her former associates from venturing to visit her. Madame de Nevers and Madame de Retz, however, kept up correspondence with the lonely exile; and alleviated her pecuniary distress when the burdened exchequer, and Henry's neglect failed to furnish funds for the maintenance of Marguerite's limited household. The keenness

of the air also, and the exposed situation of the castle, perched on the summit of a lofty and nearly inaccessible rock, had injured the queen's health, and subjected her to a chronic rheumatic affection, from which she suffered severely. The elasticity of Marguerite's temper, and the facility with which she found amusement even in her solitude, kept her from despondency. Her able pen was constantly employed; and the wit and happy point of some of her political pieces in prose and verse privately circulated, had greatly aided the king in his contest with the League. Notwithstanding her blemished character, the people and the court revered in Marguerite the last of an illustrious race; and longed to greet her again in Paris. An intense yearning also seems to have possessed Marguerite at this period to return to the scene of her past splendours and triumphs, although only there to hold the second place. She had testified respect and even affection for the queen, and sincerely commiserated her domestic trials; nevertheless, the presence of Marguerite at Paris was not agreeable to Marie. The position of the queen, beset as it was with difficulties and trials, was rendered doubly bitter by her own prejudices and hates. Marguerite, however, persevered in her design; and soon afterwards made a successful *sortie* from her fortress, upon an errand which Henry could not disapprove, as it related to the service of the State.

Henry meantime essayed to enliven the court by the splendid fêtes which he gave on the occasion

of the marriage of Mademoiselle de Guise with the Prince de Conty. This match, which, in the first instance, was proposed by the queen, created surprise and speculation. The bridegroom had a stammering tongue, and was hard of comprehension. These defects having condemned the prince to a life of comparative seclusion, he was shy and diffident; and, when suddenly addressed, lost self-command, and often retired in confusion. Mademoiselle de Guise was handsome, witty, *intrigante*, and moreover was supposed to cherish an attachment for M. de Bassompierre. The marriage was distasteful to M. de Soissons, who had hoped to have been his brother's heir. "The contract between the duke of Guise's sister and the prince of Conty is finished," writes the ambassador Parry. "M. de Soissons his brother, is highly offended at the match, and retired from this city malcontented and further disliked by the court (where this alliance has been practised) than he was before."<sup>1</sup> The duchess de Guise gave her daughter a large dowry; and manifested much contentment at her alliance with a prince of the blood. M. de Soissons continued also to deem

<sup>1</sup> Sir T. Parry to Lord Cranbourn, Calig. E. XI. 227. MS. Cotton. "Mademoiselle de Guise," writes the scandal-loving Des Reaux, "se gouverna de sorte qu'il n'y avoit que le Prince de Conti capable de l'épouser—c'étoit un stupide." The Prince de Conty died in 1614. Madame de Conty had one daughter, who died in infancy. The princess expired in 1631, at the Château d'Eu, which she inherited from her mother.

himself fortunate in his choice of a consort ; and to esteem his possessions superior to those of the rest of the world. His intense self-complacency disquieted the king, who never could become reconciled to the methodical primness of *son cousin de Soissons*. On the birth of his son, De Soissons made great retrenchments, and sold to the king his county of St. Paul ; in order, as he said, that he might liquidate his debts, “and lead thenceforth the steady and regular life which it became a man to do who has to be answerable to posterity for the waste of his goods and substance.”

The year 1605 was singularly infelicitous for Henri Quatre. Plots, rumours of conspiracies, distrusting, and domestic discord, seemed to have reached their height. The king was at issue with his consort, separated from his mistress, and suspicious of his faithful minister, Rosny. This year, also, marked the period when Rosny, the prosperous and apparently unassailable minister, was nearest to his overthrow, through the enmity of Villeroy, La Varenne, Sillery, and the Jesuit father Cotton. The latter, now become a leading and influential personage, of the court, detested Rosny for his want of religion, and his worldly prudence. These personages, therefore, conspired to render the king suspicious of Rosny's power, and jealous of his influence—“as,” said they, “it is reported that your majesty can do nothing without the guidance of this said Rosny.” They then cunningly commented on the nature of Rosny's intimacy with M. d'Epemon ;

and carped at the favour which he seemed to enjoy with the princes of Lorraine Guise. They next criticised the administration of the minister; and deplored that the Arsenal and Bastille were in his hands. These malignant insinuations dwelt on the mind of the king, wearied and suspicious as he then was, and believing himself betrayed by all his servants and counsellors. Rosny's coldness during the trial of M. d'Entragues and his daughter, had offended the king; who felt how blamable and even ludicrous his weakness must have appeared in the eyes of his rigid minister. The self-love of the king alarmed, it was easy to inflame the wound. Libels and pamphlets were next diffused throughout Paris by Rosny's wily foes: he was accused of a secret understanding with Bouillon, whose practices in the south were beginning to alarm the government. Henry began to treat his minister with distance: he discarded the familiar '*mon ami*' for *monsieur*; and frequently in the court circle alluded to Rosny as an "ingrate, who, unfortunately, had power to do the realm more harm than the late admiral de Coligny!" Circumstances of position work mighty changes in opinion: and many were present who could not refrain from a mournful smile to hear Henry so allude to Coligny, his old master-in-arms, and his mother's faithful friend. Rosny bore this reverse with firmness, though he deemed himself under the deepest calamity which could befall him. He wrote to the king in refutation of the calumnies current; Henry sent back a formal reply,

written by the hand of Loménie, his secretary. For six weeks this alienation continued. Henry's heart then relented towards his old and faithful friend; especially as none of the charges could be verified, and Rosny remained regularly at his post, humbly waiting the royal pleasure—but serving the king withal, no less diligently. The father Cotton was Rosny's inveterate persecutor; he accused the latter of opposing the Jesuit establishment in Poitiers; and of indirectly doing the Order all the injury in his power. The fact that a heretic wielded the chief power in the Catholic realm of France, was abominable to the Gallican church universally. The ministry of Rosny never would have been tolerated, able as he proved to be, had not Henry at the termination of the wars of the League, dictated as a conqueror. Rosny thus relates his reconciliation to his royal master, which took place at Fontainebleau: "One morning I presented myself as usual before his majesty, whom I found surrounded by his courtiers, and being booted for the chase. As soon as he saw me, he half rose from his chair, having a boot on one foot, and said *bon jour*, calling me 'monsieur,' his ordinary mode of address being 'mon ami Rosny,' or 'Grand Maître!' I made obeisance even more profound than usual; the which, as he told me afterwards, so smote his heart, that he with difficulty refrained from on the instant falling on my neck. He remained in reverie for a moment or two, and then said to Beringhen, that the weather was not fine enough for a hunt; and desired him

to take off his boots. Beringhen replied incautiously, that the day was propitious. 'No!' rejoined Henry, 'the weather is not fine; I will not ride to-day—take off my boots!' The king then began to converse with those around; but, observing my silence, he took Bellegarde by the hand, and said, 'M. le Grand, let us take a walk; I wish to speak to you, so that you may to-day depart for Burgundy.' When the king was at the door on the summit of the flight of steps which descends into the queen's garden, he called l'Oserai, and desired him to watch which way I took, and not fail to advertise him. I, however, remained, during his majesty's discourse with Bellegarde, on the walk which leads to the Jardin de la Conciergerie, and I remarked that his majesty's eyes were often fixed upon me. When Bellegarde took leave, I approached, and asked his majesty if he had any orders to give me? 'Where are you going?' 'To Paris, sire, upon the affair which I mentioned to you a few days ago.' 'Well, go!—I commend to you my affairs, and that you love me well,' said the king. I bowed, and withdrew towards my own apartments. I had not gone more than 300 yards before I heard myself called, and turning back, I saw M. de la Varenne running after me, and shouting, 'Monsieur! the king requires your presence!' Henry walked away in the direction of le Chemin du Chenil; as soon as I was near enough to hear, he said, 'Come, have you nothing to say to me?'—'No, sire, not at present.'—'Oh! but I



have somewhat!" replied his majesty, hurriedly. He then led me into the avenue of mulberry trees; and directed that the sentinels posted in the vicinity should be Swiss soldiers, who understood not French."<sup>1</sup> The king then embraced his old friend, and the two entered into a long and satisfactory explanation. Rosny's defence was simple and complete; for he had no admissions to make which required ingenious fencing; he served "his Henry" with zealous devotion, and as no minister ever before worshipped a sovereign. Amply did he deserve the testimony and reparation which Henry generously offered at the end of their conference. On leaving the avenue, the king, followed by Rosny, walked to the terrace, on which the gentlemen of the court waited. Amongst these cavaliers were many of the minister's most virulent opponents, and who had been watching the progress of the conversation with anxiety. The king asked what the hour was? "Nearly one, sire; you have been very long absent," replied one of the chamberlains. "Yes, Monseigneur, the time of my absence must have appeared longer to some amongst you than to myself," replied Henry, significantly. "As some consolation to these said personages, I have to inform them that I love and esteem Rosny more than ever; and that between us, '*C'est à la mort, et à la vie!*'" Turning to Rosny, the king said, loudly, "As for you, *mon ami*, go and dine;

<sup>1</sup> Mem. de Sully, liv. 20ème.

and love me, and serve me as you have always done; for I am content!"<sup>1</sup> Refreshed by the confidence of his master; and strengthened for the discharge of his duties, Rosny returned to Paris, where affairs of grave moment required his interposition.

The exile of the duke de Bouillon had angered the Protestant communities of the realm; and had created rebellious ferment in the south-western provinces. Intelligence of tumults in the principal towns of Querci, Limousin, and Perigord, was almost daily notified to the government. The Spanish government, which eagerly availed itself of every opportunity to harass the king, promoted insurrection, though in behalf of heresy. Bouillon boasted of his influence with the German Protestant powers: at a meeting holden at his palace in Hesse for the advance of reform, he exhorted his co-religionists of France to agitate, if only to accomplish his own recall, by acting on the fears of the king. King James, disgusted by the plots brewing in his realm under Spanish patronage, gave fine words only and good wishes to the Calvinists of France; and was faithful to the spirit of the promise made to Rosny, "that if king Henry repressed the designs of the adherents of his cousin Arbela, he would afford no countenance to the plots of the duke de Biron." The chiefs of the reformed party in France, were Duplessis Mornay, a man of the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

pen; and d'Aubigné the historian and satirist, who, like MM. Constant, Saint Germain, and others, relied on his tongue, rather than on his purse, for material whereon to agitate. The duke de la Trimouille, the wealthy and bigoted champion of the churches, was dead, and his heir in his minority; Bouillon was an exile; M. de Rohan inexperienced, a newly-married man, and one who had just been gratified by elevation to the highest dignities of the realm. Lesdiguières had no religion, or, at any rate, professed the quantum alone, which might accelerate his possession of military pre-eminence. The Calvinists had summoned a synod at Gap, in October, 1603, in which it had been resolved to petition the king to permit a general assembly of the churches to be convened. Other resolutions were passed, which manifested antipathy towards the government; and a resolve to agitate until the Calvinists obtained that political recognition and organization, which was believed to be necessary for the permanence of the faith. Rosny, one of their members, dilates indignantly on these aspirings; and repudiates so hurtful a project as this *imperium in imperio*. The synod, moreover, decreed that the Pope should, for the future, be alluded to as Antichrist—"for," said the members, "that which is the belief of all, ought to find expression on the lips." The king was thereupon some months subsequently petitioned to sanction the gathering of a general assembly.

Henry, though aware that the design of his Huguenot subjects was rather to cabal, than to decree acts concerning the government of the churches, consented to the convocation: he named Châtellerault as the place of assembly; and made known his intention to send M. de Rosny to preside and guide the deliberations of the deputies. This intimation, when promulgated, was distasteful to the Protestant leaders; they thereupon petitioned the king to defer, until the autumn of the year 1606, the assembly, which before they had so clamorously declared to be imperative and necessary. The king declined to recall the grace granted; and intimated that the discussion, if not then accepted, would be indefinitely postponed.

The guidance of the hot zeal, and unruly tongues of the Calvinist deputies, was an arduous office, to be successfully performed only by the zealous and temperate Rosny. He was nevertheless disliked by the Huguenots, who deemed him so absorbed by what was popularly termed "his king-worship," as to be totally indifferent to the progress of reform—which, in fact, he discountenanced, as prejudicial to the unity and prosperity of the realm. When Rosny returned to Paris after his reconciliation with the king, it was to prepare for his mission to Châtellerault. Secret advices had also been received from M. Murat,—who had been rewarded for his participation in the capture of M. d'Auvergne by a military command at Riom,—stating, that the province swarmed

with agents of Bouillon, who incited the people to insurrection; and, moreover, that intelligences were suspected between these persons and the disaffected of the towns of Toulon, Marseilles, Narbonne, Bayonne, and Blaye. The king came to Paris to interrogate the person sent by Murat. Henry believed this revelation in its most alarming purport: "You Frenchmen," said he, "love, and eagerly pursue novelties." Rosny, however, considered that the danger had been magnified; although discontent doubtless existed in the provinces denounced, he disbelieved that the intrigues of M. de Bouillon could seriously embarrass a government strong as was that of his master. "All this mystery, sire, you will find arises from the petulant outcries of people paid for the purpose—no true disaffection exists. Permit not, therefore, your repose to be lightly disturbed!"

After the return of the king to Paris, the seals were taken from Bellièvre, and intrusted to M. de Sillery, with the title of Lord Keeper; as the dignity of chancellor of France was conferred for life, or could only be forfeited on attainder. Bellièvre was now far advanced in years, and had faithfully served his country through three reigns. His capacity had suffered no eclipse, though his physical strength now failed. The veteran statesman, though he acknowledged the necessity of a colleague in the arduous duties which the menaced rising in the provinces was likely to entail, yet keenly felt his deprivation—and, in some measure, his subordination to the new lord keeper. When

Bassompierre visited the chancellor soon after this arrangement was made, Bellièvre exclaimed, "Ah, monsieur, I have served the kings of this realm as long as strength lasted; now, as I am deemed no longer capable of service, I have at length obtained permission to attend to the wants of my soul, for the which their interest had deprived me of leisure!" In order to cheer the old man, Bassompierre rejoined, "that M. le Chancelier was necessary yet, as nothing was to pass the seal without his advice being required; besides, he was still to preside at the council-board." "*Mon ami*," replied Bellièvre,<sup>1</sup> "a chancellor without seals, is like an apothecary without sugar to sweeten his drugs!" One of the first services required from the lord keeper Sillery, was to seal the letters granted by his majesty during the month of September, 1605, to Madame de Verneuil, which contained a free pardon, and a total abolition of the penalties decreed by the Parliament. The letters bestowed liberty on la Marquise; restored her to the enjoyment of her estates; and imposed perpetual silence on the officers appointed by the High Court to investigate her crime. The guards of M. d'Entragues were dismissed; and his wife was permitted to rejoin him at Malesherbes. The grace extended to Henriette was yet more ample; she was permitted to visit her children at St. Germain; and to have an interview with her father at Boisgency. "The public," says M. de Thou, "was indignant

<sup>1</sup> Journal de ma Vie.—Bassompierre.

at beholding the decree of the most venerable tribunal of the realm thus profaned. It was said everywhere, "that the king had commanded the trial of la Marquise, not to punish her, and to give a salutary example of equity, but as her father and her brother had counselled her to retire from court—which advice the said lady seemed desirous to adopt—he wished that they might now exhort her to renew her intimacy with a prince by whom she was madly admired." "Dearest Heart!" wrote his majesty in the first letter addressed to Henriette after the trial now extant: "I have received three of your letters, to which I now make response. I permit you to travel to Boisgency to see your father, whose guards I have caused to be dismissed. Remain, however, only one day, for his society is contagious! I approve also of your journey to St. Germain to see our children. Be faithful to me; for I swear that all the rest of the world is nothing to me in comparison to yourself!"<sup>1</sup>

For long this renewal of correspondence was concealed from the queen; even the prince de Joinville and Madame de Villars, who had both been recalled during the arrest of Henriette, were discreet. "This contest between the king and Madame de Verneuil could not be thus amicably concluded without creating another *fracas* between their majesties. The queen had a fine opportunity for passion and complaint. On my return from

<sup>1</sup> Lettre du Roi à Madame de Verneuil. Collection de la Reine Marie Amelie.—Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 6.—Berger de Xivrey.



Limousin I found that the brawls at Fontainebleau had reached a pitch which they never before attained.”<sup>1</sup> Rosny’s consternation was reciprocated by all Henry’s true friends: the gusts of temper in which Marie indulged, though violent, were nevertheless short-lived. During the latter months of the year, while the king was absent on his expedition to Limoges, the correspondence between the royal pair was constant, and intimate. In her letters, however, Marie rarely reciprocates the king’s endearing language; but confines herself to a short and explicit account of her health, and employments; and she concludes usually by professions of obedience, as the king’s “humble wife and handmaid.”

<sup>1</sup> Mem. de Sully, liv. 20ème. “Toutes les autres peines ne furent que peu de chose auprès de celle-là. Chaque moment, nouvelles paroles à justifier, nouvelles démarches à interpréter, nouveaux intérêts à concilier. La nuit y fut bientôt employée, aussi bien que le jour. Le calme était-il rétabli, un orage survenoit aussitôt qui remettait tout au premier état.” Ibid.

## CHAPTER II.

1605—1606.

Congress of Châtellerault—Queen Marguerite—She leaves Usson—Her interview with Rosny—She denounces the leaders of a meditated rebellion in the South—Her letter to Henri IV.—Debates at Châtellerault—Firm and politic conduct of Rosny—The duke de Bouillon—Arrival of queen Marguerite in Paris—Her interview with the king, and reception by the queen—Disaffection in Limousin—Revolt in the southern provinces of the realm—Plot for the evasion of M. d'Auvergne—Its result—Henry visits the revolted provinces—Execution of the conspirators—Submission of the duke de Bouillon—Execution of Louis de Alegonia—Progress of the king—His correspondence with Marie de Medici—Intrigues of the queen's household—Madame de Verneuil arrives in Paris—Her influence over the king—Don Giovanni de Medici—Hated by the queen and the Concœnis—Cabal to drive him from the court—Birth of Madame Christine de France—Carrousel given in honour of that event—M. de Rosny created duke de Sully—Satisfaction demonstrated at the decree—Bouillon at Sédan—The king marches to compel the com-

plete submission of the duke—Details of the campaign—Cession of the fortress of Sedan—Submission of Bouillon—Letters of the king to the princess of Orange—Interview of the duke de Bouillon with their majesties at Donchéry—Entry of Henry and Marie into Sedan.

M. DE ROSNY quitted Paris to perform his important functions at Châtellerault on the sixth of July 1605. Already factions were astir; schemes of preposterous moment were attributed to the Huguenot chieftains, who became the more alert and rebellious, as the period elapsed during which, according to the Edict of Nantes, they were to hold eight strongholds in the realm, and which expired in the year 1606. This crisis might have been perilous, had the Calvinists at this time possessed a competent leader; but Bouillon was an exile—Lesdiguières too devoted to the loaves and fishes of office to offend his sovereign; while La Trimouille was dead. The Protestant Confederation, therefore, was weak; no powerful member commanded suffrages, or dictated the plan of campaign. Meantime discontent was rife in the southwestern provinces; the adherents of the late duke de Biron boasted that revenge for his death was now in their power; the followers of Bouillon caballed to procure his recall; and to compel the king to acknowledge the stainless honour of their champion. It was asserted that a plan existed to seize Bordeaux, and moreover that the duke de la Trimouille had sanctioned and approved of the design on his deathbed: also, that one captain de

Chassaing was commissioned to seize the southern fortresses of Sarlat and Gourdon. The leaders of these enterprises were Pierre de Rignac and Gedéon de Vassignac, gentlemen retainers of Bouillon, and devoted to the interest of their master. The rumour of these intrigues convulsed the adjacent districts; and penetrated throughout the province of Limousin, where already the seed of revolt had been sown by M. d'Auvergne. Queen Marguerite, through one M. de Rodelle, her chamberlain—who had been solicited to enter into the plot—obtained information of the incendiary schemes afloat, and resolved to communicate with the government: her promised revelations, moreover, afforded her excuse to demand conference with Rosny on his way to Châtellerault. Marguerite, therefore, wearied of the solitude of Usson, determined at any risk to venture from her prison, without the preliminary of the royal assent. Accordingly, soon after the departure of Rosny from Paris, Marguerite secretly quitted Usson, and travelling *incognita*, arrived at Toury. From this place she wrote to the king, stating what she had done, her reasons for the step, and her intention to proceed to Villers Cotterets, a hunting-lodge in the forest of Compiègne, the favourite retreat of Charles IX. when in his gloomiest moods, and which formed part of her paternal heritage. Henry manifested no displeasure, but wrote to Rosny, desiring him to confer with the queen on his route, to sound her intentions, and to profit by any information she might give relative to the

malcontents. This command was very agreeable to Rosny, who was always on friendly terms with Marguerite; and he therefore resolved that his wife should be the first court lady who complimented her majesty on her return to the world. Meantime the queen despatched M. Rodelle to Rosny, to request, that, if they did not happen to meet on the road between Paris and Orleans, he would wait her arrival at the latter place. Misgivings naturally assailed the queen on the unauthorized step she had taken: she even received advices from Paris which warned her not to approach the capital, where her presence would never be tolerated by queen Marie. On the arrival of Rosny and his wife at the village of Cercote, they nevertheless found Marguerite, who, having journeyed thither the preceding day and being fatigued, had not yet quitted her chamber. Their presence was notified to her majesty, who ordered that they should be admitted to her chamber. Rosny does not record his feelings on meeting again, after an interval of nineteen years, the once lovely and still brilliant princess. The queen was deeply affected, and shed tears as she clasped the hand of her old friend, whose early counsels, unfortunately for herself, she had disregarded.<sup>1</sup> After an interval, Marguerite began to converse with the ease and *enjouement* for which she was celebrated: and the conversation lasted an hour. Her majesty then dismissed Ros-

<sup>1</sup> Mem. de Sully, liv. 20ème—Economies Royales, edit. en 1 tome fol.—Vie de Marguerite de Valois.

ny, promising to continue the interview after her *lever*. Subsequently Marguerite confided to Rosny the knowledge which she possessed of the meditated rising in Limousin; and introduced Rodelle, who commenced his confession by frankly avowing that he had at first approved and joined the hostile confederation; but quickly repenting, he vowed to make atonement by denouncing his intended colleagues. He admitted that thirty other gentlemen had, like himself, seceded from the insurgent banners, and were ready to serve the king by their testimony. Rosny listened, took down the names of the alleged conspirators; and promised immunity to Rodelle and his colleagues who had thrown themselves on the royal mercy, in consideration of the intercession of queen Marguerite. He nevertheless wrote to the king, avowing his disbelief that real revolt existed; for that the agitation of a few obscure miscreants was easy to extinguish by their arrest, which he was about to effect; but that he had sent Rodelle to Paris, to undergo any further examination it might please his majesty to ordain.

When these transactions had been discussed, and the king's interest served, Marguerite consulted Rosny on the step which she had taken, and asked whether he thought her presence in Paris would be welcome to their majesties? "I assured the queen," writes Rosny, "that she would be very well received by the king and queen, as I knew their opinions on the matter." This assertion did not satisfy Marguerite; she was beset with

fears relative to her position: the last of the Valois, her wealth—nominally great, was perhaps coveted; she was now a stranger at a court which had once been entranced by her charms; and she was a divorced wife, about to present herself in the presence of the jealous recipient of her lost dignities and position. Marguerite, therefore, asked Rosny to pledge his word that no harm or dishonour should befall her. The latter, aware that the king wished to possess Usson, for fear lest that fortress might fall into the power of some Calvinist leader, unhesitatingly complied; after which he took leave. “I then took the road to Châtellerault; while Marguerite journeyed to the château de Madrid, in the environs of Paris.”<sup>1</sup> At Artenay, Marguerite thought it prudent to advertise the king of her approach. She thus addressed his majesty:

*Queen Marguerite to Henri Quatre.*<sup>2</sup>

“MONSEIGNEUR:—I have introduced to M. de Rosny the gentleman who gave me the important information that a dreaded evil was to break forth in the month of August. I should indeed have been unworthy of the honour which I receive from your majesty, had I not promptly given you warning. He (Rodelle), wished to avow all to your majesty in my presence; so that through my intercession his relatives, at least, might not suffer. After mature consideration, Monsieur de Rosny, Monsieur de la Varenne, and

<sup>1</sup> Mem. de Sully, liv. 22ème.

<sup>2</sup> MS. de Dupuy, t. 217.—Guessard—Lettres de Marguerite de Valois, Reine de France et de Navarre.



myself, have come to the conclusion that the promise which this ingrate made them, to return to his house during the month of August and promote the said enterprise, was given only with the intent of discovering the most foolhardy : for we cannot believe that he ever himself meditated such perfidy. Nevertheless, your majesty will be the best judge ; and duty forbade me to conceal any fact from your knowledge. I am now going, with the permission of your majesty, to my house de Boulogne, to dwell there in all obedience to your commands ; also, when it shall please your majesty, I will present to M. le Dauphin that which I have destined for his acceptance, as I have more fully explained to M. de Rosny. I have confided your castle of Usson to the safe keeping of an old and faithful cavalier my *maître-d'hôtel* ; to my Swiss guards ; and to the soldiers who have composed the garrison during the time which it has pleased God that I should dwell there. Moreover, I have left Madame de Vermont to keep them all duly mindful of their duty. It is an important place ; I have exacted promise from all not to allow any person to enter, unless it be an envoy sent by your majesty, authorized by letters mandatory under the great seal. It will be expedient if your majesty promptly provides a competent and trustworthy officer to take possession. I received this castle from your majesty ; and I now return it : for it is a fortress which, in the hands of an enemy, would be the ruin of the adjacent country. My desires, henceforth, are limited to Boulogne ; for the solitary habits contracted by a sojourn at Usson during nineteen years give me little inclination again to change my abode. Happy shall I, moreover, esteem myself to be, where my actions can be tested ; the which have

never had other tendency than to serve your majesty, as one of his most humble and grateful servants; who, after kissing your royal hands, prays, Monseigneur, that God will bless you with a long and happy life.—Your very humble and obedient sister, servant, and subject, .

“MARGUERITE.”

Rosny, meantime, arrived at Châtellerault, where already deputies from the churches had assembled in great numbers, all imbued with the utmost distrust of the government, and of Henry's envoy specially. The oration of Rosny at the first sitting of the assembly was not re-assuring. He upheld the royal authority, to which he said that of the churches was subordinate; and though the king was firmly resolved to adhere to the charter of Nantes, yet that he would suffer no enterprise subversive of the authority of his crown. He therefore announced that this assembly would be the last general gathering tolerated by his majesty: that each church might, nevertheless, deliberate and decree ecclesiastical laws in synod; but on questions of civil rights the obvious course was to petition the king through the deputies whom his majesty deigned to receive as the representatives of the reformed churches of his realm. That for the future the king prohibited the public reception and discussion in synod of missives from foreign potentates; or of letters written by MM. de Rohan, de Bouillon, de Lesdiguières, de la Force, de Châtillon, and

Duplessis; "because his majesty intends that nothing shall be negotiated or publicly discussed in his kingdom without his participation." Rosny then notified that although he was instructed not to curb freedom of deliberation in the assembly, yet should resolutions or addresses be proposed, or spoken in defiance of the rights of the crown, or of the respect owing personally to his majesty, he was prepared to repress with authority such abuses.<sup>1</sup> Much mutinous discussion ensued; the Huguenot deputies in vain strove to emancipate themselves; and as an indemnification for the check which they had received, commenced to cabal in private. A memorial thereupon, was circulated amongst the principal members, signed by Bouillon, Aubigné, St. Germain, and others, in which it was proposed that the king should be petitioned to grant permanent deliberative councils to every province of the realm; and in which all persons holding office under the crown should be excluded as partial and ineligible, the better to negotiate leagues, and levies of men and money, and other matters for the support of the churches! When the treasonable nature of this document came to the ears of the zealous Rosny, it inspired him with dismay. The French Calvinists, by their insubordination and impossible demands, brought upon themselves in great measure, their subsequent fate, when, during the reign of Henry's son and successor,

<sup>1</sup> Sully, *Mém.*, liv. 21ème. De Thou—*Hist. de son Temps*, 134, édit. de Londres.

they presumed, in similar manner, to manœuvre and defy the warnings of the great Cardinal minister, de Richelieu. Rosny made no public outcry or protest: he cautiously tested the disposition of the assembly, in order to judge how generally such opinions prevailed. He found that knowledge of the memorial in question, had been confided only to a few leading members. To these Rosny addressed himself, and forcibly pointed out the enormity of such proposals; and the hopelessness of presenting them to the king. To this remonstrance Aubigné replied, "That if Henri were immortal, the Protestants would confide their churches to his honour and attachment, and abandon their strongholds; but as his majesty was unhappily liable to death, the uncertainty of their position under his successor compelled them to combine, and provide security for the churches under any contingency."<sup>1</sup> The memorial, nevertheless, was suppressed by the skill of Rosny; who authoritatively announced that the king would withdraw all concession to subjects so hostile. Bouillon, moreover, perceived that the discussion of such a project must render his return from exile hopeless; and that Henry, out of regard for the safety of his son and successor, would be compelled to adopt measures of strict repression towards the churches. The duke, moreover, at this stage of the proceedings at Châtel-

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 134. Dupleix. Mezerai.

lerault, was indulging in self-complacent hopes of a speedy and honourable recall. He wrote to the king to state the anxiety felt by the princes of the Reformed Faith in Germany to enter into a league similar to that proposed in 1596 by the French envoys, Bongars and Ancel, to put down the might of the House of Hapsburg; in furtherance of which the princes had selected himself as the negotiator between themselves and his majesty: "Sire, M. de Monluet has often indicated to me that the most convincing method which I could adopt towards imbuing your royal mind with the persuasion of my loyalty, would be by acts of zeal and solid service. I now transmit the subjoined proposals."<sup>1</sup> Henry, warned by his vigilant Rosny, avoided the snare so dexterously spread,—that of a premature involvement with the Catholic powers of Europe. "There was no assurance or token that the princes of Germany had commissioned the duke de Bouillon to play the rôle of mediator and conciliator as he stated—a prince who, it was notorious, stood charged with high crimes by the privy-council; it was impossible to put faith in such assertions," writes the prudent Rosny. The king therefore shortly replied, "That the advices sent by M. de Bouillon were imperfect; and that the notification came too late." Letters, subsequently captured, and written

<sup>1</sup> Marsolier, Vie du Duc de Bouillon.

by Bouillon, proved that the statement he had made was purely apocryphal; and was given with the intent to procure honourable mention in the addresses of his majesty's representative at Châtellerault, and to facilitate his reconciliation with the king.

At Châtellerault Rosny, meanwhile, continued to wage good warfare. The deputies next arrogated to themselves absolute right to nominate the two resident ministers, who were to represent Protestant interests at court; and act as the oracle of the reformed churches. Rosny, however, firmly upheld the royal prerogative, and prevailed; the assembly then agreed to select six able members, out of which number two were to be chosen by the king. The next subject debated was the evacuation of the strongholds conceded by Henry to his Calvinist subjects for a period of eight years, at the signature of the edict of Nantes. By a signal and unexpected grace, Henry spontaneously permitted the tenure of these places for an additional four years. The assembly was then dissolved; the members retiring on the whole disconcerted, and displeased at the exercise of the prerogative, used for the first time to direct and control their privilege of debate. The issue of this assembly still further alienated the king from his "old friends" of the reformed persuasion. Duplessis Mornay especially fell under the royal displeasure; "a man of the pen," he was sus-

pected of having drawn up the offensive memorial proposing to separate the Calvinist communities from the jurisdiction of the government; and thus to establish a republic in the heart of France. Duplessis Mornay, thereupon, began to fortify Saumur, and rendered the place capable of containing a garrison of 8,000 men. "But, sire, where are these soldiers to spring from?" asked Rosny, when combating the fears of his royal master, who proposed the arrest of so audacious a subject. Few, comparatively, in number, and divided by broils and by the dictates of self-interest, the Calvinists of France testified intense hostility towards a government which would have befriended them, without having power to execute their threats. Perpetually intriguing for foreign alliance, which was never cordially bestowed in the presence of the might of the French government under Henri Quatre and his son and successor, the Calvinists placed themselves in the position of defeated rebels; the toleration of whom was a weakness in the body-politic, which at length it was deemed expedient to eradicate.

While these heartburnings were pending, the court and Paris were absorbed by speculations on the return of queen Marguerite to the capital, from whence she had been an exile for more than twenty-five years. Her expulsion, therefrom, during the reign of Henry III. had been



outrageous and disgraceful; her return under the generous *regime* of Henri Quatre was honourable, and becoming the dignity of a great princess, the last descendant of a mighty line of kings. Henry sent the Marshal de Roquelaure to compliment the queen at Estampes; and to announce that the young duke de Vendôme would receive her on her arrival at the château de Madrid, in the Bois de Boulogne, which was then half a league from Paris. The château, meantime, had been magnificently fitted for the reception of its long-absent mistress. Marguerite arrived on the 19th of July 1605, and was greeted by César-Monsieur, who came from St. Germain, attended by the Marquis de Souvré, governor of the princes. Marguerite the following day indited a rapturous letter to the king on the perfections of his son. "I believe, monseigneur, that God has given him to your majesty for special service. Never have I experienced a more transporting surprise than my admiration of this marvel of a child, and of his wise and apt speech. He is a royal prodigy truly worthy of your majesty, who excels in all things, as the stately edifices which now adorn the banks of the river testify." The queen adds a postscript to this production thus: "I took extreme precaution that the journey taken (from St. Germain) by this delicate little angel of yours, should do him no harm; and I exhorted him very zealously not to pass

through Paris. Your majesty will pardon me, if I presume to say that you are not careful enough about his health.”<sup>1</sup> This letter the queen sent by M. de Chanvalon,<sup>2</sup> whom Henry, with great want of discernment, had despatched to welcome Marguerite to her château; queen Marie likewise sent M. de Châteauneuf with compliments of welcome. The king visited Marguerite at Madrid on the 26th of July, until which period the queen received no person. Henry arrived from Monceaux about seven in the evening, and remained with Marguerite until ten o’clock. The interview was cordial, satisfactory, and enlivened by reminiscences of the brilliant court of the deceased kings her brothers. Henry assured Marguerite of his fraternal protection; and promised her consideration and honour from the queen. Marie’s susceptibility nevertheless had already been wounded by Marguerite’s extravagant praise of César-Monsieur. “There are two things,” said Henry to Marguerite, “which I must request your majesty to concede at my prayer: the first is, that, for the sake of your health, you will refrain from turning night into day, and day into night; my

<sup>1</sup> MS. Dupuy, t. 217, fol. 92. Guessard—Lettres de Marguerite de Valois.

<sup>2</sup> “Le roi envoya devant elle le Sieur de Chanvallon, lequel elle avoit autrefois plus aimé qu’elle ne devoit, de sorte que l’on estimoit cet accueil honteux a une si grande princesse.” Dupleix, t. iv.

second request is, that, for the prosperity of your pecuniary affairs, you will be less profuse in your expenditure!" "Sire, I will strive to please you; but your first request will be difficult to comply with, for such has been the habit of my life from childhood: as to my profusion, I fear to make promise—prodigality and perhaps heedless munificence have been the failings of the races of Valois and Medici!" responded Marguerite. The day but one following this interview, Marguerite had public audience at the Louvre with queen Marie. The interest of the occasion caused the whole court to assemble at the Louvre. It was a painful and humiliating ordeal; but the tact and *savoir faire* of Marguerite were equal to the emergency. Though five-and-twenty years of dreary seclusion had impaired the charms which once conquered all hearts, yet the spectators pronounced that Marie de Medici, as she that day appeared, fresh, majestic, and blazing with crown jewels, wanted the indescribable graces of manner, and *tournure* conspicuous in Marguerite. That her old spirit of coquetry was not yet extinct, the attire of Marguerite on that day evinced. Like Madame de Verneuil, Marguerite wore her hair sprinkled with powder; and drawn up from her forehead to an enormous height. Her dress was studded with jewels, and adorned by innumerable flounces of lace, set out by an enormous hoop;<sup>1</sup> a fashion in

<sup>1</sup> "La reine Marguerite faisoit faire ses carrures et ses

favour at the court of queen Catherine, but which Marie had discarded for more flowing drapery. Marguerite, however, moved with such perfect grace in her advance towards the dais, under which sat the queen, that the empire of hoops was at once again established; and though some little time elapsed before they were universally adopted, Marie de Medici herself was at length compelled to conform to the prevailing taste.<sup>1</sup> Henry presented Marguerite to queen Marie, who graciously embraced, and invited her to sit under the canopy, whereupon a conversation ensued for several minutes between their majesties alone. The king, however, is said to have subsequently chided his consort, for not having advanced to meet queen Marguerite, instead of receiving her at the dais; adding some reflections on their comparative descents, peculiarly mortifying to the queen. Marguerite became the

corps de jupes beaucoup plus larges qu'il ne le falloit, et ses manches à proportion; et pour se rendre de plus belle taille elle faisoit mettre du fer blanc aux deux côtés de son corps pour elargir la carrure. Il y avoit bien des portes où elle ne pouvoit passer. Elle avoit aussi un moule un demi pied plus haut que les autres." Tallemant de Réaux, Hist. 13, t. 1, edit. de Montmerqué.

<sup>1</sup> "Elle portoit un grand vertugadin qui avoit des pochettes tout autour, en chacune desquelles elle mettoit une boîte où étoit le cœur d'un de ses amans trepassés; car elle étoit soigneuse, à mesure qu'ils mouroient d'en faire embaumer le cœur. Ce vertugadin se pendoit tous les soirs à un crochet, qui fermoit à cadenas, derrière le dossier de son lit." Tallemant de Réaux—Hist. 13, t. 1.

guest of the king and queen at St. Germain on the 4th of August. When she was first introduced to the young Dauphin by his governors, her exclamations of admiration were flattering enough to satisfy the maternal pride even of the queen. "Ah, how beautiful he is! what a handsome boy! Happy is the Chiron who instructs this future Achilles!" exclaimed her majesty, with the affected pedantry then in vogue. Marguerite seems to have thoroughly enjoyed her sojourn at court; without feeling the least embarrassment, or testifying regret at the pre-eminence enjoyed by Marie. She jested with the king; and renewed her old *liaison* with Roquelaure, Bellegarde, and other of that witty throng—the courtiers of the late reigns. She visited the monasteries and convents of the vicinity, leaving everywhere substantial marks of munificence. The *savoir vivre* and regal birth of Marguerite enabled her to treat the royal mistress and parvenue ladies of the court—so sharp a thorn in Marie's crown—with a condescension and hauteur which the queen vainly envied. On her return to Madrid, Madame de Verneuil sent to ask audience, with her usual forward audacity. Marguerite coolly despatched a gentleman to inform Madame la Marquise that she would ascertain the king's pleasure relative to the interview. Her majesty, nevertheless, suffered several months to elapse before she made application; and then, at the desire of Henry, conceded the favour demanded. From St. Germain, when writing to M.

de la Force, Henry says, at this period, "I came to make sojourn at this place (St. Germain), to drink the waters of Pougues, for lately I have been cruelly tormented with toothache, and have been bled; but my gums swelling, I at length resorted to the lancet—so that now I feel relieved, thank God, and am able to hunt daily. My sister queen Marguerite, is staying with us, who conducts herself in such agreeable fashion, that I have every reason to be content."<sup>1</sup> Marguerite was invited by the royal pair to accompany them to Fontainebleau; an invitation which she accepted, but which an attack of illness prevented her from enjoying. Few eminent personages composed the household of Marguerite; her chief lady at this period was Madame de Vermont, whose son was highly favoured by the queen, and with whom she carried on an active interchange of verses and love epistles. The incorrigible levity of the queen speedily extinguished the fair prospect of honour and influence which her return to Paris seemed to promise. In turn profligate and devout—notorious as the heroine of a scene which recalled to the memory of the Parisians the orgies of her former hôtel du Couture Ste. Catherine; or celebrated as the inmate of some convent cell performing penance of marvellous severity, Marguerite to the end of her life furnished the saloons of the

<sup>1</sup> Archives de M. le Duc de la Force—Mém. de la Force, t. 1. Also—Lettres Missives—Berger de Xivrey, t. 6.

capital with scandal. The secret of her wondrous influence, notwithstanding these aberrations, is happily expressed by an author nearly contemporary. "She was a true heiress and representative of the Valois; she never made a gift without offering excuse for its limit; she was the protectress and delight of men of letters; her table was surrounded by the learned; and she profited so ably by their lights and converse, that she spoke better than any woman of the age; she wrote more eloquently; and as charity is the queen of virtues, so this great queen consecrated her manifold gifts by abundant alms-giving." Women of unblemished character eagerly sought the society of the queen, and admission to her hôtel in Paris—such as the duchess de Retz, the princess dowager de Condé, the duchess de la Tremouille, and the duchess de Guise—leaders of fashion, and whose dicta gave the law to the saloons of the capital.

Affairs, meantime, wore an alarming aspect in Limousin and the adjacent provinces. The lieutenants of the duke de Bouillion raised the flag of rebellion on their master's fortresses in the south; and spoke menacing words, as to the certainty of foreign intervention in aid of the schemes of the duke. MM. de Rignac and de Bassignac fortified themselves in the castles of Turenne and Ceré, and proclaimed their intention to defend to the last the interests of their master, and that of the churches, which they declared were



synonymous. The *Sieur de la Charbonnière* baron de Chapelle Biron, meanwhile, being a kinsman of the late duke de Biron, and one of the deputation who had pleaded in vain at St. Maur for that unfortunate nobleman, fomented revolt in the neighbourhood of Limoges: nevertheless, as Rosny constantly asserted, "the malice of Henry's foes surpassed their power to accomplish evil." MM. de Giversac and Lugagnac, also individuals of local influence, agitated, and did much mischief by spreading erroneous reports—especially Lugagnac, who roamed over Guyenne and Limousin, and inflamed the insubordination already rife. Henry, therefore, himself resolved to take the field, and subdue and disarm his rebels. A similar campaign in Poitou, in 1602, had prevented an outbreak for the repeal of La Pancarte, that unpopular tax; and the king hoped to reap the best results from his presence in subduing the revolt of a faction. Rosny met his royal master at Fontainebleau, and recounted to him the proceedings at Châtellerault. A council was summoned, in which the condition of the south-western provinces and the attitude of Bouillon were discussed. The latter now in person commanded within his fortress of Sedan; and his attitude of menace encouraged the cabals of the south, as well as the sympathy demonstrated for the duke by the Protestant states of Germany and by the Swiss Cantons. It was resolved that the king should follow the course of the

Loire towards Limoges; while Rosny, at the head of a corps of artillery, took the road to the same *rendezvous* by Montrond. Henry returned to Paris for a few days, and then commenced his march, on the 16th of September. He was accompanied by the queen, and by her uncle Don Giovanni de Medici, who had arrived in France after the acquittal of Madame de Verneuil, in the hope of mediating between the royal pair. Marie attributed all the cabals in the realm to the evil influence of the Entragues family; and covertly defended Bouillon, as she had before interceded for the life of Biron. The character of Marie was eminently *tracassière*, as Henry himself acknowledged: if the government, or the person of the king was assailed, Marie, by a process of distorted logic, invariably came to the conclusion, that the malecontents were the good friends of herself, and of M. le dauphin. The sudden march of the king inspired terror in the breasts of the disloyal caballers, who had hoped to plot and agitate at leisure. Chapelle Biron and Giversac, therefore, hastened to send an ambassador in the person of the Sieur de Fonssac, to appease the royal wrath by confession; and by confirmation of the statements made by Marguerite's chamberlain, de Rodelle. They confessed that they had received the sum of 12,000 crowns from Madrid; and inculpated Bouillon as the real instigator of the meditated revolt. It was stated by this

Fonssac, that but for the intrigues of the duke the cabal would have become extinct before the close of the assembly at Châtellerault: also, that on the defection of Rodelle many gentlemen of the provinces intended to follow his example, had they not been dissuaded therefrom by one Aubignac, an envoy from Sedan. This personage had informed them that the smallness of the sum despatched in furtherance of the revolt was an instalment of the Spanish loan, and meant for distribution only amongst subordinate agents; that the duke was all-powerful in England, Holland, and the German Protestant States; "and that his friends would see him at their head before they hoped, and his enemies ere they desired." There can be but little doubt that the boastful words of Bouillon incited his friends and adherents to contemplate more than they had power to perform, and more than the duke himself intended to attempt. This overture the king received whilst sojourning at a place called Hallier, which is no longer to be found on the route between Paris and Orleans. Here his majesty also received advices of a plot concocted by M. d'Entragues, to aid the escape of his step-son Auvergne from the Bastille. The audacity of the enterprises undertaken by the Balzac family, whom no grace seemed to propitiate, might well move the indignation of the queen. The information was given to the government by a personage named Le Cordier,

who deposed that ropes and pulleys had been procured for M. d'Entragues, by a man of the name of Giez; and that they were hidden in the mansion of Malesherbes, ready to be transported to M. d'Auvergne, on the first favourable occasion. The grand-provost Defunctis thereon received orders from the king to examine into the accusation; and M. de Berangueville was despatched again to arrest D'Entragues, and search his abode. The ropes were found concealed in a loft appertaining to the mansion, as deposed to by Cordier. M. d'Entragues positively denied that he had plotted the flight of M. d'Auvergne: he was, however, compelled to submit to a severe interrogatory; an ordeal shared by his wife, and by every domestic separately. Nothing satisfactory was elicited: "M. d'Entragues," wrote the king to Rosny, "refused to answer any questions except in the presence of the grand provost; but he has written a *factum*, explaining what he intended to do with the said ropes and other machines which he had commanded to be manufactured. It is written and signed by himself, and is in all respects a production as circumspect and prudent as usually emanates from the pen of the said count."<sup>1</sup> Rosny advised his royal master to send M. d'Entragues to console his stepson in the Bastille. Henry, however, evaded the counsel—his reconciliation with Henriette

<sup>1</sup> Lettre du Roi à M. de Rosny, *CEconomies Royales*, chap. 51.

was now accomplished, and his majesty was reluctant to disturb the dearly-purchased concord. The affair ended, therefore, by the still more severe incarceration of M. d'Auvergne, who thenceforth was not permitted to receive his friends; while the visits of his wife were restricted to once a week. M. d'Entragues was again hampered by the presence at Malesherbes of an exempt and two archers; who had orders never to lose sight of their prisoner; or to suffer any written communication to leave the château without previous inspection.

The king reached Orleans about the 26th of September, still uncertain as to the movements of Bouillon. He was here greeted by other penitents, whom the report of the royal journey had inspired with dismay. These gentlemen were the envoys of 120 cavaliers, who had formed the project on the outbreak of the rebellion, to seize the town of Villeneuve or the Agenois; a county appertaining to Marguerite—a revelation which greatly exasperated the queen. Henry contented himself by the counsel of Rosny, with giving verbal assurances of present security, and perhaps of future consideration to all suppliants for pardon, until the true extent of the conspiracy became developed, and the course of Bouillon ascertained. Henry continued his journey to Blois, still accompanied by the queen, who kept vigilant guard over the proceedings of her consort; and

with whom, during this progress, she managed to keep on friendly terms. A great and reassuring event here occurred: The day following the arrival of their majesties at Blois, a courier brought a letter from the duke de Bouillon to the king. The duke began his letter by protestations of attachment, and by laments that he had displeased the king, and stating that he was ready to atone for his offences with his blood; that he had never dreamed of resisting or of opposing the royal authority; and that he had despatched expresses to the captains and lieutenants of all his strongholds in the south to surrender them to his majesty, and to open the gates of all his towns and mansions. "This order, sire, nevertheless, is a useless one; for there is not one of my servants, who does not acknowledge your sovereign authority. I grieve, sire, that I may not myself approach to lay the keys of my fortresses at your feet, and humbly to sue for pardon and reconciliation."<sup>1</sup> This communication gave satisfaction to the king; which was enhanced by the arrival of Blanchard, the confidential agent of Bouillon, and who held authority over the ducal appanages in Guyenne.<sup>2</sup> Blanchard confessed the evil designs which animated the adherents of his master; but owned

<sup>1</sup> Sully, liv. 21ème. Marsolier, Vie de Duc de Bouillon.

<sup>2</sup> Mercure François, ann. -1605.—Economies Royales. Dupleix, t. iv.

that the disaffection had been purposely exaggerated, and had not been inflamed by M. de Bouillon, who wished nothing so much as to obtain again the royal favour. Although the menaced rebellion seemed extinguished by the prompt submission of Bouillon, yet Henry resolved to proceed to Limoges with military *appareil*, to displace the lieutenants who had presumed to hoist a rebel flag. These unfortunate men, abandoned by the duke, fell victims to the example, which it was thought necessary to present. The queen took leave of her consort at Tours, and returned to Paris, escorted by her uncle Don Giovanni de Medici; while Henry, at the end of September, after an interview at Loches with Rosny, entered Limoges, where he was greeted with acclamations. Before the middle of October, all the strongholds of Bouillon were garrisoned by royal troops; and the seven officers in possession, who had fomented the troubles in the province, were conducted as prisoners to Limoges, where they were immediately brought to trial. The six barons, Chapelle Biron, Giversac, Tayac, Lugognac, Vassignac, and Rignac, escaped from the realm. The officers were condemned to die the death of traitors by decapitation; which sentence was executed during the month of December. A similar sentence was pronounced on the refugee barons—their estates were confiscated, and seized by the royal commissioners; and they were degraded from their ba-



ronies and dignities.<sup>1</sup> Further execution was done on the person of Louis de Alagonia, Sieur de Merargues, who was arrested and suffered in Paris for treasonable relations with Zuniga. The secretary of this ambassador Bruneau, was actually in conference with Merargues when he was arrested, and also conveyed to the Bastille by order of the provost Defunctis. Zuniga presented a protest against this proceeding, which he termed a violation of international rights. "If your king aids the enemies of my master and of the serene archdukes by money and levies, why should I not help and forward the schemes of malcontent Frenchmen? This gentleman, M. de Merargues,<sup>2</sup> offered me his services for the archduke—is it to be wondered that he would rather combat for a catholic cause than side with rebels, heretics, and adventurers?" The insolence of this remonstrance stirred the strong passion of the king, and he made response himself to the ambassador. "Since the peace of Vervins, the ministers of Spain have conducted themselves at my court with such guile, insolence, and falsehood, that I have legitimate reason to distrust the sincerity of their master's pacific professions. I have not thought good to abandon a people whom you call rebels to the op-

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, *Hist. de son Temps*, liv. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Louis de Alagonia de Merargues, gentilhomme Provençal. Sully says that he was a relative of the duke de Joyeuse.

pression of Spain. The Seven Provinces generously assisted me when your masters were waging against this realm a cruel and iniquitous warfare. Shall I not therefore pay them back in their necessity that which they so generously lent to me? The Dutch, to whom you apply the odious name of rebels, are not traitors: their success, their power, and their moderation justify their conduct and their secession from the crown of Spain!"<sup>1</sup> Henry's subsequent letter unsparingly dealt with the case: he informed Zuniga that his secretary, being convicted of the grossest perfidy by documents taken from his hands at the time of his arrest, had subjected himself to the ordeal of the torture chamber; and that it would depend whether the evidence against Merargues was strong enough to condemn that individual, before remission was vouchsafed to M. Bruneau. After much angry discussion, Merargues suffered for his crime; and the secretary was liberated on condition that he quitted the realm. The crime for which the former died was the design of delivering Marseilles to the Spanish fleet; to liberate M. d'Auvergne; and other similar projects, in which it was more than suspected by the public that the Balzac family had tampered. Abundant proofs of the conspiracy were found amongst the papers of the accused, which were produced on his trial.

<sup>1</sup> De Thou—Hist. de son Temps, liv. 134. MS. Bibl. Imp. 8477. Mém. de Nevers, t. 2, p. 88, et seq. Mathieu. Dupleix.

There were those in the realm, however, who, while acknowledging the necessity of checking the provocations and perpetual enterprises of the Spanish court, yet deemed that a one-sided justice had been done by the executions of this winter of 1605. M. d'Entragues and d'Auvergne had been respited from death for overt treason; while the duke de Bouillon, the promoter, if not the leader of the late *tracasseries* in the south, was still at large; and had not even been condemned *par contumace*, while his deluded victims perished on the scaffold.

After the return of Marie de Medici to Paris, an active correspondence was carried on between the royal pair. Henry wrote every day, and sometimes twice a day. He tells the queen that he is weary of his sojourn in the provinces, and longs to rejoin her. Sometimes Henry complains of indisposition and fatigue, and specially prays Marie to be careful of her health, as she was again *enceinte*. The king's letters, however, chanced for some days to miscarry; and from allusions subsequently made by his majesty, who gives his consort the sage advice, *ne vous fâché de rien*, it would seem that some tart reproaches for this supposed omission ensued. From Châteauroux Henry facetiously writes, "*Mon cœur*, I am about to mount on horseback to sleep at Vatan's house, where I shall see the wife of the bishop of Verdun, which will be the first ecclesiastical princess I have met." The bishop of Verdun was a prince of Lorraine, half-

brother of the late dowager queen Louise. Following the example of the deceased cardinal de Chatillon, the bishop becoming enamoured of Mademoiselle Emilie de Vatan, formally espoused her in contempt of his ecclesiastical superiors and the dignity of his rank; and threatened, if his offence was visited by deprivation of his see, to retire to La Rochelle and make profession of the reformed faith. By the good offices of Henry IV. the affair was stifled;<sup>1</sup> and some years afterwards the bishop resigned his see, and retired to the Capuchins of St. Nicholas de Nancy, where, after performing penance, he emerged again into the world, after the lapse of seven years, as bishop of Tripoli. Henry arrived at Fontainebleau on the 8th of November. After a successful progress through the disaffected localities, he found the queen at the château; for Marie, propitiated by the attention paid to her, travelled at great personal inconvenience from Paris, to give him rendezvous.

<sup>1</sup> Lettre du Roi a la Reine—Collection de M. Feuillet de Conches. Lettres Missives, t. 6. The affair caused the king at first some tribulation. He relates the matter in a despatch addressed to the cardinal de Joyeuse, to unfold to his holiness. “Je suis en très grande peine de l’évêque de Verdun, lequel transporté de fureur amoureuse, on plutôt abandonné de Dieu, a espouse une gentifemme de mon royaume. Les noces ont esté faites en l’abbaye de Gersy, de laquelle est abbesse une sœur du dit de Valot, où les bans ont été proclamés trois dimanches sous le nom d’Eric de Lorraine.”

Their majesties returned to Paris in December, to receive the report and address of a general convocation of the clergy of the realm, which met to debate upon various important matters; but more especially on the expediency of accepting the Tridentine Canons. The French clergy perseveringly pressed conformity with the decrees of Trent on the government and nation; but the enactments concerning discipline, and the presentation of benefices, and other ecclesiastical laws, had constantly procured the rejection of this code, as one hostile to the immunities of the Gallican Church, and her freedom from ultramontane control. The address presented by the prelates, nevertheless, contained an urgent exhortation to Henry to accept the canons, as the only possible way to restore the glory of the Church of France; and to raise her from her depression—"Sire, the christian world universally has accepted the decrees of Trent: France alone rejects them, and ungratefully opposes privileges already granted, against the desire of him who gave them! Sire, let us conform, and accept the holy canons, which Christendom obeys!" said the archbishop of Vienne. The address was presented to Henry on the terrace of the garden of the Tuileries. His majesty replied: "I cannot deny the truths which you have uttered. I believe your assertions to be true: the Church is afflicted, and depressed—but I will do my best to raise her.

You admonish me to accept the council: I desire the publication of the said canons; but you acknowledge, that oft-times worldly interests prevail over considerations purely spiritual. Nevertheless, I will always shed my blood for the weal of the Church and the service of God. As for simoniacal practices, and the false tenure of benefices, which you exhort me to put down—cure yourselves first of evil covetousness; and then exhort and incite others to follow your good example. Finally, be assured of my favour personally; and of my zeal to promote the service of God!” The deputation was about to retire, but Henry had yet a word to add of rebuke and exhortation. He reproved the prelates and priests for their factious debates; their long residence in the capital, when their sees required pastoral care. His majesty commented upon the burden which such conduct imposed on the poor curés, upon whom all the ecclesiastical responsibility of the realm devolved during their abode in Paris. This portion of the royal answer was carefully suppressed. Henry seldom had made a more vigorous and telling address, than this extempore harangue, pronounced for some unknown reason in the garden of the Tuileries on a cold December morning, the king being surrounded by none of the adjuncts of royal state.

A few days after this interview, Paris rose in consternation at the report that another regicidal at-

tempt had been made on the life of the king. One evening at dusk hour, Henry and his suite, the king riding somewhat in advance, crossed the Pont Neuf, on his return from a hunting expedition. When the king was on the bridge a man rushed forwards, and seizing the skirts of his majesty's cloak pulled him back on his horse and violently shook the cloak, which was securely clasped. The gentlemen of the suite speedily rescued their sovereign: the assailant proved to be a poor madman, named Jacques des Isles, whom Henry rescued from the swords of his cavaliers, and afterwards ordered that the unfortunate man should be conveyed to *les petites maisons*. The parliament, nevertheless, insisted upon trying des Isles for his life; and condemned him to be hanged, and gibbeted—a sentence which Henry refused to sanction. The affair was treated with the solemnity which might have been accorded to a true parricidal attack:—and the king endured the very depths of *ennui*, and his Christmas festivities were spoiled by the multitude of addresses and condolences presented, upon an affair which Henry himself pronounced only *bon pour rire*.<sup>1</sup>

The new year 1606, though it opened propitiously for the government, dawned with the clouds of domestic disquiet. The imperious temper of the queen, could tolerate no rival near the throne. Marie wrote to her uncle the grand duke, “that

<sup>1</sup> Journal de Henri IV., ann. 1605.



to a faithful husband she would have proved a submissive and loving spouse ; but rather than tolerate the presence of insolent mistresses, one of whom had audaciously conspired against the rights of her son, she would make war to the death !” During the preceding month, Marie had been informed by Madame Concini, of the reconciliation between his majesty and Madame de Verneuil. Eleanore piqued herself on scrupulous fidelity to her royal mistress ; and though admonished by her husband, by M. de Rosny, and by Don Giovanni de Medici, to hide so irritating a fact from her majesty as long as possible, she nevertheless deemed that her duty required its revelation. The angry transports of the queen were so great, that fears were entertained for her life. She declared her resolve not to receive any lady, however august her rank, who visited, or even spoke in public to la Marquise ; and proclaimed her intention, did Henriette appear in her presence even in the streets of Paris, to cause her to be ignominiously ejected from her sight by the soldiers of the body-guard. Madame de Verneuil, nevertheless, boldly took possession of her hôtel in the Rue de Tournon ; and was permitted by the king to pass two days at St. Germain, in order to see her children, which concession still more exasperated the queen. Henry wrote, with his own hand, to Madame de Montglat, governess of the royal children, directing the latter to receive la Marquise :—

*The King to Madame de Montglat.*<sup>1</sup>

“MADAME DE MONTGLAT,—I send you this line to inform you that Madame de Verneuil proposes to sleep to-morrow night at St. Germain, in order to see her children. Permit her to lodge in the castle, and allow her to see them: but you will not let her greet my son the dauphin, or Madame, unless by accident. Let her see my son the chevalier de Vendôme and his sisters. I have written upon the subject which you mentioned to me when last at St. Germain; and of the complaints which you had been informed that Madame de Verneuil had made against you: she has informed me that such report is false, as she herself will tell you, and prove to you by the cordial reception which she will give you. Behave in the same manner to her; and send me news of my children. Good night, Madame de Montglat, this 4th day of January, Paris.

“HENRY.”

Don Giovanni de Medici, the queen's uncle, embroiled himself also at this period with his niece by the prudent counsels which he ventured to render. The residence of Don Giovanni in France was not pleasing to her majesty, who beheld Concini subordinate, and discredited by the slight notice bestowed upon him by her uncle; while she herself was subject to censure from his lips, such as even the king himself, except on very rare occasions,

<sup>1</sup> MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth. 9138.

ventured not to offer. Don Giovanni was a noble prince, of handsome presence and undoubted gallantry. He had valiantly served in the Low Countries against prince Maurice; and at the latter end of the year 1505, after visiting the court of London, arrived in France, where Henry gave him welcome, and permission to establish himself permanently in Paris. Don Giovanni de Medici, therefore, emboldened by the favour of the king, often, at Henry's suggestion, advised the queen to moderate her temper; and if she could not tolerate the presence of Madame la Marquise, at least not to give herself the vexation of causing inquiry to be made, to search out the proceedings of the latter. This advice might have been adopted, had not Don Giovanni himself visited la Marquise, at the request of the king; and because "the said lady assembled at her hôtel the choicest and bravest spirits of the capital." The queen's fresh fit of anger commenced on the morning of the new year; for when Rosny and other courtiers, according to custom, visited the royal bed-chamber, before their majesties had risen, to present their *etrennes*, the queen would not speak, but pretended to be asleep, while her royal consort held animated discourse with M. le Grand Maître, and inspected the presents which he had brought. When the courtiers had retired, excepting Rosny, Madame Concini, and Caterina Selvaggio, Henry informed the former that the queen awoke at six o'clock in tears; and since then had con-

tinued to scold him, as she said that her dream had confirmed a report communicated to her a few days previously. "I pray, I beseech your majesty, to spare me the sorrow and vexation of discussing such reports,—and to abstain from publicly avowing your sentiments, at least until after the birth of my child. They lead people to believe that you regard others more than myself, and take delight only in the society of certain personages,—and what personages!—people who betray you, and who hate you in their hearts!" said Marie suddenly, with vivacity. Rosny deplored their misunderstanding; but said that if their majesties would follow his advice, and allow him to act, they might soon find contentment. "The queen eagerly replied that she was willing to accept any antidote; while the king declared that such could not fail to be to his taste!" Rosny then advised the royal pair to lay their respective grievances before a chosen arbiter, and allow him to apply the remedy he should deem efficacious for such ills; they undertaking to allow the said person to carry out his sentence without fear of appeal, public disgrace, or of private resentment. "Henry replied that he was ready to sign such an engagement, and to appoint me as arbiter, invested with plenary authority; but the queen hesitated, and said that she must reflect, and be informed of what remedy I should propose." Rosny's remedy would have been to deport over the frontier the Concini, and half a dozen other obnoxious members of the

household, who for their own purposes kept up a fire of irritation in the mind of her majesty. The sapient minister, however, does not explain how he intended to dispose of Madame la Marquise, Mesdames de Moret and des Essarts, whose cabals were to the full as obnoxious. The *accouchement* of the queen, meantime, happened on the 10th of February, 1506, at the Louvre. Marie gave birth to a daughter, Christine de France, eventually duchesse de Savoye,—whose birth, baptism, and subsequent marriage,<sup>1</sup> Marie frequently declared in after-life, were ushered in by “clouds of dark adversity to herself personally.” Her majesty’s recovery, nevertheless, was propitious and speedy; and the courtiers vied with each other in offering splendid fêtes to divert the melancholy of their royal mistress. A grand carrousel was organized under the auspices of the duke de Bellegarde, in honour of the new-born princess. The façade and courts of the Louvre, and those of the hôtel du Petit Bourbon, were magnificently illuminated. Many of the adjacent streets blazed with lights, and were filled by a dense crowd of spectators. At midnight, a salvoe of artillery and a flourish of trumpets announced the commencement of the spectacle. The gates of the hôtel du Petit Bourbon were thrown open, and a troop of cavaliers on

<sup>1</sup> Christine de France espoused Victor Amadeus duke de Savoy.

horseback emerged, led by Bellegarde. The elements were to be represented by separate bands of cavaliers. Bellegarde, therefore, was preceded by twenty-four pages attired in cloth of silver, playing on musical instruments, and surrounding a car, on which reposed the god Neptune, bearing his trident. A troop of syrens, sea-gods, and mermaids followed. The duke rode at the head of a *cortége* of twelve gentlemen, superbly attired. The troop entered the court of the Louvre, made obeisance to their majesties, who occupied a balcony surrounded by a magnificent court, and retired apart. The next troop was that of the God of Fire. A number of pages in scarlet liveries, beating anvils, dashed into the court, amid showers of fireworks; while occasional "warlike explosions" were heard, which greatly affrighted the ladies of the court. Vulcan then appeared, escorted by the duke de Rohan, and by twelve cavaliers attired as Parthians. Next came the masque intended to represent Air. The cavaliers were preceded by Juno in her car—the goddess being represented by Mademoiselle la Glandée, a beautiful woman, well-known to Henry and to many of the cavaliers. Birds of all kinds, eagles, kites, hawks, pigeons, and doves, were borne around the car of the goddess, who was escorted by the count de Sommerive, and twenty cavaliers in gallant array. The fourth troop, representing Earth, was led by the duke de Nevers: these cavaliers were dressed as Moors;

and were preceded by two elephants. A band of musicians, and men bearing torches, flags, and banners closed the procession. The carrousel commenced when all the troops of masquers had assembled before their majesties. A quadrille was first performed by each of the equestrian bands, with commendable precision. The cavaliers then skirmished, and offered mock combat. The pastime lasted throughout the night; and was pronounced to be one of the most costly and successful fêtes which had ever been given at the court of France.<sup>1</sup> The following day Henry gave a banquet at the Louvre; the next day a ballet was danced; the third day a troop of Italians performed a comedy: the fourth day his majesty held council of state, at the solicitation of Rosny, who thought that the diversions had been sufficiently prolonged, and that the next fête ought to be holden within the stronghold of M. de Bouillon—the castle of Sedan.

Henry, meanwhile, had long been meditating some mark of special honour and grace to confer on his devoted Rosny, whose fidelity, through evil and good report, was blameless. The recent able diplomacy of the minister had stifled a menaced insurrection; while his firmness in maintaining the royal prerogative, and in defining the limits of the liberty granted at Nantes to the Protestant communities, had conferred an

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, liv. 136.



inestimable boon on the crown. The title of duke, with a patent of *haute noblesse*, had been offered to Rosny by his master, on the departure of the former for England, to compliment king James on his accession. Rosny, however, had then declined the honour, on the plea that his wealth was not considerable enough to maintain so exalted a dignity, without a departure from the conscientious probity which he had vowed to observe on assuming office under the crown. The benefactions of Henry had now removed this obstacle; and immediately after the birth of his daughter Madame Christine, the king affectionately commanded his devoted servant to accept the dignity again proffered; and to name the estate he would wish to be erected into a *duché pairie*. Rosny accepted, and proposed his territory of Sully. The letters patent were signed on the 12th of February,<sup>1</sup> and registered by acclamation on the last day of the month. Every member of la Haute Chambre recognized the merit of the new peer; and hailed his exaltation. "The letters patent alluded to the illustrious blood of Béthune, and commemorated the eminent services of the minister," says de Thou. The *cortége* of the new duke, when, according to custom, he went in person to present his patent to the Chambers, comprehended every influential personage of the court: some went to please the

<sup>1</sup> *Economies Royales*, in fol., p. 558. *Journal de Henri IV.*

king; others to propitiate the minister. Seldom had so illustrious an assemblage filled la Chambre Dorée on an occasion less august than to applaud an oration from the throne. Sully was presented to the peers by César-Monsieur, and by the constable de Montmorency. All the princes of the blood, excepting M. de Soissons, honoured the occasion by their presence. Sixty of the most illustrious of the assembly returned to the Arsenal with the new duke, to compliment his consort, and to partake of a sumptuous banquet. To the extreme gratification of Sully, on his arrival at home, the first personage who advanced to embrace and congratulate him was the king. "Ah! M. le Grand Maître," exclaimed Henry, who perceived the emotion of his minister, "I have come to dine with you without an invitation; shall I get a bad dinner?" "Probably, sire. I never expected to be so much honoured." "No, no; while I waited your arrival, I made a descent into your kitchens, and I saw there some of the finest fish possible, besides divers ragoûts very much to my taste. You were so long, that I have already solaced myself by eating some delicate oysters, and by drinking a tankard of the best vin d'Arbois that I have ever tasted!" The duchess de Sully was on the following day graciously received by the queen. In short, so manifest was the merit and the services of the duke, that few ministers have attained to the highest dignities with assent so universal and cordial.

The duke de Bouillon, meantime, continued his warlike preparations at Sedan, and spoke defiantly of Henry's ability to take the fortress, or to dislodge him therefrom. Nevertheless, the duke proclaimed that his attachment to Henri Quatre had never faltered; but that he dreaded "*les esprits durs, acariâtres, et imperieux*" by which his majesty was guided. "M. de Biron was assured of impunity, and of the attachment felt towards him by his majesty: he came to Fontainebleau, was arrested, and suffered for 'an idea,' treasonable, indeed, but which had never been acted upon; and the only witness of which was a man lost in reputation, and who notoriously gained his livelihood as a moral scavenger for the great!" argued the duke, to the friends who advised him to visit his sovereign. Bouillon first demanded that letters of abolition, for all true or pretended crimes, should be granted him; but that, without such grace, he could not resolve to deliver Sedan to the king; or venture to show himself in Paris. M. de Bouillon hated the duke de Sully, and chafed at a pre-eminence which he neither comprehended nor tolerated. The leading Calvinists of the realm shared this sentiment. Sully was of them, but never for them: indeed, he was accused of seeking popularity by a show of impartiality; while caustic tongues, such as that of du Perron, wittily complimented the "great free-thinkers of the realm"—free-thinking being,

as the cardinal averred, from the example of the great duke de Sully, a sole and obvious regard to personal and dynastic interests, without reference to any religious obligations whatever. The queen gave Bouillon support; and maintained that if the king had ministers in whom the duke could confide, his majesty would soon see the sentiments of loyal attachment which animated M. de Bouillon. All these assertions and *pourparlers*, nevertheless, did not advance the reconciliation between his majesty and his rebel subject. The Princess of Orange Louise de Coligny, the firm friend of Bouillon, was appealed to by both parties—the king and M. de Bouillon, both being, as it afterwards appeared, eager for reconciliation, though neither would make the first advances. The princess was commissioned to ascertain privately whether pecuniary embarrassment beset the duke; as Sully suggested that the offer of two or three hundred thousand crowns might free him from the probable mortgages incurred for the fortification of Sedan, and render the duke less reluctant to resign that fortress. Bouillon, however, scoffed at the supposition of pecuniary involvement, and informed the princess “that Madame de Bouillon was preparing to retire to Heidelberg; that Sedan was impregnable; and that all the German powers were pledged to assist him in escaping from the ruin plotted by the malice of his enemies, who pos-

sessed the royal ear.”<sup>1</sup> Henry, therefore, no longer hesitated to take the field against a subject whose words were so opposite to his alleged sentiments. Sully, however, resolved to make an attempt to subdue the antipathy felt towards himself; and, after consultation with Madame d’Orange, he despatched a conciliatory epistle, recommending Bouillon not to provoke the king to extremity. The queen also wrote, stating, “that she wished M. Bouillon well; and that when opportunity occurred, would prove that she bore him esteem and friendship: nevertheless, she affectionately advised him not to alienate the royal goodwill.” To Sully, Bouillon replied, “that he was not inclined to purchase temporary favour by grovelling concessions.” What his reply was to Marie never transpired: especially as it is believed that the queen addressed the duke without the knowledge of her royal consort. Troops were assembled; Sully, as grand-master of artillery, undertaking the command of the siege works for the reduction of Sedan. “I gave his majesty a pledge that, eight days after my batteries began to play, I would put him in possession of Sedan.” According to his own statement, Sully was actuated by intense personal hostility towards the potent nobleman whose humiliation he declared to be necessary for the well-being of the

<sup>1</sup> De Thou. Marsolier—Vie du duc de Bouillon. Siri, Mem. Recondites, t. 11, p.

crown. "It is the design of the king and his minister to reduce our chieftains one by one," said the Protestants in their local synods. "M. de la Trimouille was harassed and persecuted unto death—M. de Condé has been compelled to conform; M. de Châtillon died in virtual exile from court—the late Madame de Bar suffered intolerable oppression; while M. de la Force is bribed to prefer the glory of this life to the welfare of the faith." There was much truth in this bitter plaint; the calamities complained of, however, had not been wilfully perpetrated by the king; they arose as the results of the creed and system of the government, which naturally repressed the rise of institutions and persons hostile to its principles. The positive assertions of the queen, however, that but for M. de Sully, Bouillon would offer overtures of reconciliation, at length made impression on the royal mind, confirmed, as the suggestion was, by the half-affirmation of Villeroy. When Henry, therefore, took leave of his Parliament, prior to his departure for Sedan, he declared, with extended arms, that his expedition against Bouillon was made "to compel him to accept pardon, should his deeds be worthy"—gracious words, which ought to have brought the duke to the royal feet. The queen, meantime, unexpectedly declared her intention to accompany her consort on this expedition, and grace his entry into the duke's

captured town. Marie, it is believed, took this journey when scarcely convalescent, on purpose to shield the duke from the effect of any severe counsels given by Sully, in the event of an ill-advised attempt at defence. The rage of M. de Bouillon was reported to be uncontrollable, when convinced that the king was on his march towards Sedan. He stamped on the ground, declaring that he would garrison Sedan with 4,000 men; and that he had the command of seventeen companies, and several regiments of cavalry, besides being assured of the active aid of the Swiss cantons. Meantime, the good offices of the princess of Orange, of Odet de la Noue, and of M. de Nettancourt were ceaseless. Consent was at length extorted by these personages from the duke to enable them in his name to offer to receive their majesties and the court at Sedan, with any concession dictated by the king, short of placing the fortress at the disposal of the crown. Henry, however, had now gone too far to recede. On the 15th of March he commenced his march, attended by the principal cavaliers of the court, and by a few regiments of cavalry. Three days later, Sully was to follow with an army of 25,000 men, and fifty field-pieces, which were to give his majesty *rendez-vous* at Mousson and at Rheims. At this last place, the king was to spend Easter Sunday; but a bad cold detained his majesty for several days at Nanteuil, which, however, did not prevent him



from taking the diversion of the chase in the forests surrounding the magnificent domain of the duke de Guise. Villeroy, meantime, travelled in the royal suite—and showed inclination to promote the views of the mediators between his majesty and the duke. Any presumed counterpoise to the influence of Sully was welcome to the colleagues of the latter; and before his arrival at Pont-à-Mousson, it was resolved to effect the reconciliation, and leave the minister to disband his levies, and sign a treaty, in the stipulations of which he had not participated. Sully speaks bitterly in his memoirs of the under-hand counsel given by Villeroy. Accordingly, M. de Bouillon was again earnestly admonished; and finding that his master was really in earnest, he requested la Nune and Nettancourt to pray the king to send him M. le Villeroy. Henry was by this time at Donchéry, a place only a league from Sedan; while the queen and her ladies were at La Cassine, a palace belonging to the duke de Nevers. Meantime, a variety of reports prevailed: the king was informed that, resolved upon obstinate resistance, Bouillon had introduced into Sedan a strong German garrison; and had himself retired to Heidelberg, from whence he intended to implore the aid of the archdukes. Henry, therefore, wrote to hasten the advance of the artillery; he desired Sully to send a complete camp equipage, with the implements requisite for the fortification of his tent during the

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expected siege. Other informants represented M. de Bouillon as angry, dismayed, without a garrison or ammunition of war, and therefore quite at the royal mercy. This information proved to be most genuine. Henry replied by sending Villeroy and Nettancourt to the village of Torcy, on the confines of the principality of Sedan. M. de Bouillon gladly there gave them *rendezvous*; and, in the hands of the clever and subtle Villeroy, was soon rendered flexible in will as could be desired. In conference with Sully, pride would have clashed against pride; but Villeroy treated the duke with humble respect; though he failed not to display the bond which united his name to that of Biron and Auvergne, in the attempted insurrection to obtain the repeal of the tax *du sou pour livre*. At the first conference, the articles of surrender were sketched; the following day they were amplified and signed. "The duke de Bouillon, satisfied of the *bienveillance* of their majesties, signed all that was put before him," relates M. de Thou. The articles stipulated that Sedan should be ceded to the king for four years, who would appoint a governor, and name a garrison of fifty men-at-arms. That the inhabitants of Sedan should take an oath of allegiance to the king, in which M. de Bouillon was to set the example.<sup>1</sup> The entreaties of Marie de Medici no doubt conduced to this for-

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, Hist. de son Temps. Marsolier, Vie du duc de Bouillon. Journal de Henri IV., année 1606.

fortunate result, by arousing the old friendship felt by Henry for his valiant Turenne. Her majesty, in her zeal to promote the reconciliation, quitted La Casine for Donchéry, where she shared the limited accommodation provided for the king. The duke's defiance and sudden humility seemed to puzzle the duke de Sully; who, in his record of the event, demonstrates more pique at having his warlike operations so summarily suspended, than satisfaction at the felicitous reconciliation, by which war was averted from the realm. Henry, however, gives himself much trouble to explain events, and to satisfy his minister; whom he exhorts to join him without delay at Donchéry, after having countermanded the further levy or muster of troops. The day on which the articles were signed, Henry, in his joy at the unexpected turn affairs had taken, wrote the following charming letter to the princess of Orange, on the return of Villeroy from Torcy. All things then seemed halcyon; his majesty enjoyed conjugal tranquillity, and hoped to have regained a friend, once very greatly esteemed:

*Henry IV. to the Madame la Princesse d'Orange.*<sup>1</sup>

“MA COUSINE,—I can say, like Cæsar, ‘Veni, vidi, vici;’ or, in the words of the old song:

<sup>1</sup> MS. F. de Béth. Bibl. Imp. 8681. Also Journal de Henri IV., année 1606—Etoile.

Trois jours durèrent mes amours  
Et se finirent en trois jours  
Tant j'étois amoureux. . . . .

DE SEDAN! You will now judge whether my opinion was sound or not; and whether I was not better informed of the condition of this said place, than those who wished to persuade me that it would consume three years to take. M. de Bouillon has promised to serve me faithfully for the future, and I have engaged to forget the past. This concluded, I hope to see you soon, God willing; for as soon as I shall have entered the place, and made necessary provision for my service, I shall return to Paris. Bonjour, ma cousine. Arséans, who will present you with this, will give you my personal news. This 2nd day of April, 1606, at Donchéry.

“HENRY.”

Bouillon, meantime, was advised to visit their majesties at Donchéry—a counsel he was eager to follow before the arrival of Sully. Accordingly, on the 8th of April, he set off early from Sedan, and arrived before the king and queen had left their couch. He was admitted to the chamber, where, falling on his knees, Bouillon kissed the hand of his clement sovereign, who affectionately embraced him. “Turenne mon ami,” said Henry, “believe that it was not for Sedan that I took arms, but to win back thy loyal services!” Marie, also, testified her satisfaction, and conversed with the duke for some minutes. Bouillon then greeted some of his old friends of the court; and returned to Sedan, rather in the guise of a conqueror than in that of a pardoned rebel, to make

preparations for the reception of his sovereign on the morrow. Marsolier, in his elaborate life of the duke de Bouillon, enters at some length into the reasons which induced the king to show such lenity, after desertion and defiance so flagrant. He believes that Henry, having nothing to apprehend from foreign leagues—all the chief potentates of Europe being occupied by domestic affairs of moment—the king preferred to accord a gracious pardon, rather than find himself compelled to execute justice for high treason a second time on a prince of potent lineage—one also, who, like Biron, had been the friend of his youth. Moreover, the king believed that the exile of Bouillon was likely to produce hostile combinations amongst his Huguenot subjects; who lulled themselves into comparative security, while possessed of the strongholds of Sedan and Saumur as refuges. “Sedan would not stand eight days against our arms; as to M. de Duplessis, he has fortified Saumur, and can neither find nor pay the 8,000 men necessary for its garrison,” scornfully remarked Sully, who longed to blow down Morny’s castle of straw!

Marie and Henry made their entry into Sedan on the 9th of April.<sup>1</sup> They were received with ac-

<sup>1</sup> MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth. 8477. Fontanieu, 450–1. “Mon cousin,” writes king Henry to the Landgrave of Hesse, “j’ai pris Sedan avec le maître de la maison, non à force d’armes, mais par les effets de ma bonté et clemence; acquises par les soumissions et devoirs auxquels le duc de Bouillon s’est porté à mon arrivée.”—Archives Grand Ducales, De Hesse.

clamations and blessings by the townspeople, who made the air ring with vivas for the king, the queen, and M. le dauphin. Outside the town the royal pair were greeted by Bouillon; "not only have I taken Sedan, but I have also captured the master of the house!" wrote Henry to the Landgrave of Hesse.<sup>1</sup> The ready tears fell from the eyes of the king, at the welcome he received in a place so lately represented as a focus of revolt. "*Voyez comme le peuple m'ayme—oui; je scay certainement qu'il m'ayme!*" repeated his majesty many times during his progress. In the evening the town was illuminated; and a display of fireworks added to the hilarity of the festival. The sojourn of their majesties was not extended beyond three days, during which a royal decree gave the command of the citadel to the duke's friend, de Nettancourt. The king kept possession of the fortress for one month; the garrison of which consisted only of 300 lansknets and 25 Swiss soldiers; and then, with royal magnanimity, he restored it to the duke.<sup>2</sup> Bouillon accompanied the king on his road back to his capital as far as Mouzon, and then said farewell, promising to repair to Fontainebleau, for the approaching ceremony of the state baptism of the royal children. Letters of pardon and absolution under the great seal, were presented to the Parliament of Paris, and registered without opposition; for

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence de Henri IV. avec Maurice le Savant. p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> MS. Bibi. Imp. Béth. 8477. Fontanieu, 1550-1.

very universal was the satisfaction which this reconciliation inspired. "My reflections on this compact," writes the duke de Sully, "may not be deemed impartial. I will, nevertheless, remark, that the duke de Bouillon may esteem himself fortunate to have got off so cheaply, after having compelled his majesty to put an army on foot; and to cause the advance of fifty pieces to a distance of twenty leagues from Sedan, having also forced the king to encamp under the very walls of the fortress. Henry admitted that this, and the conduct of the duke, sometimes put him into a violent passion of resentment. His clemency, nevertheless, was finally stronger than his resentment."

END OF VOL. I.







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